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3 Vols
1st edn

MY LORDS OF STROGUE.



MY LORDS OF STROGUE.

*A CHRONICLE OF IRELAND, FROM THE CONVENTION
TO THE UNION.*

BY
HON. LEWIS WINGFIELD,
AUTHOR OF 'LADY GRIZEL,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. I.



LONDON :
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty the Queen.
1879.
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‘ God of Peace ! before Thee
 Peaceful here we kneel,
Humbly to implore Thee
 For a nation’s weal.
Calm her sons’ dissensions,
 Bid their discord cease,
End their mad contentions—
 Hear us, God of Peace !
 (*Spirit of the Nation.*)

W 727 me
v. 1

TO

E. W. B.

I inscribe this Book

IN MEMORY OF

A CLOSE FRIENDSHIP.

Em. C. 2111. 2112. 53. 34.

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MY LORDS OF STROGUE.

CHAPTER I.

MIRAGE.

‘Hurrah! ’tis done—our freedom’s won—hurrah for the
Volunteers!

By arms we’ve got the rights we sought through long and
wretched years.

Remember still through good and ill how vain were prayers
and tears—

How vain were words till flashed the swords of the Irish
Volunteers.’



O sang all Dublin in a delirium of triumph
on the 9th of November, 1783. From the
dawn of day joy-bells had rung jocund
peals; rich tapestries and silken folds
of green and orange had swayed from every balcony;
citizens in military garb, with green cockades, had

silently clasped one another's hands as they met in the street. There was no need for speech. One thought engrossed every mind ; one common sacrifice of thanksgiving rolled up to heaven. For Ireland had fought her bloodless fight, had shaken off the yoke of England, and was free—at last !

The capital was crowded with armed men and bravely-bedizened dames. Carriages, gay with emblazoned panels, blocked up the narrow thoroughfares, darkened to twilight-pitch by the boughs and garlands that festooned the overhanging eaves. Noddies and whiskies and sedans, bedecked with wreaths and ribbons, jostled one another into the gutter. Troops of horse, splendidly accoutred—officers mounted upon noble hunters—clattered hither and thither, crushing country folk against mire-stained walls and tattered booths, where victuals were dispensed, without so much as a ‘ By your leave.’ Strangers, arrived but now from across Channel, marvelled at the spectacle, as they marked the signs of widespread luxury—the strange mingling of the pomp and circumstance of war with the panoply of peace—the palaces—the gorgeously-attired ladies in semi-martial garb, swinging up and down Dame Street in gilded chairs between the Castle and the Senate House, and back again—dressed, some of them, in brodered uniforms, some in rich satin and brocade. Sure the homely court of Farmer George in London could not compare in splendour, or in female beauty either, with that of his Viceroy here.

A stranger could perceive at once that some important ceremony was afoot, for all along the leading streets long galleries had been erected, decorated each with sumptuous hangings, crowded since day-break with a living burthen; while every window showed its freight of faces, every row of housetops its sea of heads. From the Castle to Trinity College (where a huge green banner waved) the road was lined with troops in brand-new uniforms of every cut and colour—scarlet edged with black, blue lined with buff, white turned up with red, black piped with grey; while the stately colonnades of the Parliament House over against the College were guarded by the Barristers' Grenadiers, a picked body of stalwart fellows who looked in their tall caps like giants, with muskets slung and bright battle-axes on their shoulders. King William's effigy, emblem of bitter feuds, was in gala attire to-day, as if to suggest that rival creeds were met for once in amity. Newly painted white, the Protestant joss towered above the crowd, draped in an orange cloak, crowned with orange lilies; while his horse was muffled thick with orange scarves and streamers, and wore a huge collar of white ribbons tied about his neck. Placards inscribed with legends in large characters were suspended from the pedestal to remind the cits for what they were rejoicing. 'A Glorious Revolution!' 'A Free Country!' One bigger than the rest swung in the breeze, announcing to the few who as yet knew it not, that 'The Volunteers, having overturned a cadaverous

Repeal, will now effectuate a Real Representation of the People!' Yes. That was why Dublin was come out into the streets. The victorious Volunteers had untied the Irish Ixion from a torture-wheel of centuries, and, encouraged by their first success, were preparing now to pass a stern judgment on a venal parliament.

From the period of her annexation to England in the twelfth century, down to the close of the seventeenth, Ireland had been barbarous and restless; too feeble and disunited to shake off her shackles, too proud and too exasperated to despair, alternating in dreary sequence between wild exertions of delirious strength and the troubled sleep of exhausted fury. But that was over now. The chain was snapped; and the first vengeance of the sons who had freed her was to be poured on the senate who were pensioners of Britain; who had sold their conscience for a price, their honour for a wage. A grand Convention was to be opened this day at the Rotunda, from which special delegates would be despatched to Lords and Commons, demanding in the name of Ireland an account of a neglected stewardship. No wonder that the populace, dazzled by an unexpected triumph, were come out with joy to see the sight. Light-hearted, despite their sorrows, the Irish are only too ready to be jubilant. But there were some looking down from out the windows who shook their heads in doubt. The scene was bright, though the November day was overcast—pretty and picturesque, vastly engaging to the eye. So

also is a skull wreathed with flowers, provided that the blossoms are strewn with lavish hand. These croakers were fain to admit that the Volunteers had done wonders. The prestige of victory was theirs. Yet is it a task hedged round with peril—the wholesale upsetting of powers that be. It was not likely that England would tamely give up her prey. She was ready to take advantage of a slip. Ireland had cause to be aware of this ; but Ireland thought fit to forget it. A fig for England ! she was a turnip-spectre illumined by a rushlight. A new era was dawning. Even the schisms of party-bigotry had yielded for a moment to the common weal. Catholics and Protestants had exchanged the kiss of Judas ; and Dublin resigned herself to sottish conviviality.

Hark ! The thunder of artillery. The first procession is on its way. It is that of the Viceroy, who, attended by as many peers as he can muster, will solemnly protest against the new-fledged insolence of a domineering soldiery who dare to set their house in order and sweep away the cobwebs. He will make a pompous progress round the promenade of Stephen's Green ; thence by the chief streets and quays to King William's statue, where he will gravely descend from his equipage and bow to the Protestant Juggernaut. This awful ceremony over, he will walk on foot to the House of Lords hard-by, and the holiday-makers will be stricken with repentant terror. He has his private suspicions upon this subject though—a secret dread of the mob and of the College lads of Trinity ; for rumour whispers

that the wild youths will make a raid on him, and they have an ugly way of running-a-muck with bludgeons and heavy stones sewn in their hanging sleeves. So he has taken his precautions by establishing about the statue a bodyguard—a cordon of trusty troops—whose aggressive band has been braying since daybreak ‘Protestant Boys,’ ‘God save the King,’ and ‘King William over the water.’

But the undergraduates are too much occupied at present in struggling for seats within the Commons to trouble about the English Viceroy. For the heads of the Convention are to arrive in state, and Colonel Grattan, it is said, will appear in person to impeach the Assembly of which he is a member. Their gallery is crammed to suffocation. Peers’ sons with gold-braided gowns occupy the bench in front, silver-braided baronets crowd in behind. Peeresses too there are in their own place opposite, like a bevy of macaws. A sprinkling only; for most of the ladies, caring more for show than politics, prefer a window at Daly’s club-house next door, where members drop in from time to time by their private passage to gossip a little and taste a dish of tea, while their wives enjoy the humours of the crowd and ogle the patriot soldiers.

What is that? A crack of musketry; a *feu de joie*, which tells that the second procession has started; that my lord of Derry is on his way to the Rotunda. And what a grand Bashaw he is, this Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry, who, more

Irish than the Irish, has thrown himself heart and soul into their cause ! There is little doubt of his popularity, for yells rend the air as he goes by, and hats are tossed up, and men clamber on his carriage. It is as much as his outriders can do to force aside the throng. A magnificent Bashaw entirely, with a right royal following. A prince of the Church as well as a grandee ; handsome and *débonnaire* ; robed from top to toe in purple silk, with diamond buttons and gold fringe about the sleeves, and monster tassels depending from each wrist. A troop of light cavalry goes before, followed by a bodyguard of parsons—dashing young sparks in cauliflower wigs. Then some five or six coaches wheeze along. Then comes my lord himself in an open landau, bowing to left and right, kissing his finger-tips to the peeresses at Daly's ; and after him more Volunteers on magnificent horses and a complete rookery of clergy. He turns the corner of the House of Lords, and in front of its portico in Westmoreland Street cries a halt, to gaze with satisfaction for a moment on the broad straight vista of what now is Sackville Street, which has opened suddenly before him. As far as eye may reach—away to the Rotunda—are two long lines of gallant horsemen in all the nodding bravery of plumes and pennons—a selected squadron of Volunteers which consists wholly of private gentlemen—the pride and flower of the National Army.

When the cavalcade stops there is a stir among the peeresses, for they cannot see round the corner,

and are much disgusted by the fact. A clangour of trumpets wakes the echoes of the corridors. My lords have just finished prayers, and, marvelling at the strange flourish, run in a body to the entrance. The Volunteers present arms, the bishop bows his powdered head, while a smile of triumphant vanity curls the corner of his lip, and he gives the order to proceed. The lords stand shamefaced and uneasy while the people hoot at them, and the bishop's procession—with new shouts and acclamations—crawls slowly on its way.

One of the attendant carriages has detached itself from the line and comes to a stand at Daly's. Its suite divide the mob with blows from their long canes. Two running footmen in amber silk, two pages in hunting-caps and scarlet tunics, twelve mounted liverymen with coronets upon their backs. The coach-door is flung open, and a dissipated person, looking older than his years, emerges thence, and throwing largesse to the crowd, goes languidly upstairs to join the ladies.

It is my Lord Glandore of Strogue and Ennis-howen, and the party up at the window to which he nods is his family. That tall refined lady of forty or thereabouts who acknowledges by a cold bow his lordship's careless salute is the Countess of Glandore (mark her well, for we shall see much of her). She has a high nose, thin lips, a querulous expression, and a quantity of built-up hair which shows tawny through its powder. She will remind you of Zuccherò's portrait of Queen Bess. There is the

same uncompromising mouth and pinched nostril, colourless face and haughty brow. You will wonder whether she is a bad woman or one who has suffered much; whether the wealth amid which she lives has hardened her, or whether troubles kept at bay by pride have darkened the daylight in her eyes. Stay! as your attention is turned to them you will be struck by their haggard weariness. If she is addressed suddenly their pupils dilate with a movement of fear. She sighs too at times—a tired sigh like Lady Macbeth's, as though a weight were laid on her too heavy for those aristocratic shoulders to endure. What is it that frets my lady's spirit? It cannot be my lord's unfaithfulness (though truly he's a sad rake), for this happy pair settled long since to pursue each a solitary road. Neither can it be the carking care of money troubles, such as afflict so many Irish nobles, for all the world knows that my Lord Glandore—the Pirate Earl, as he is called—is immensely wealthy, possessing a hoary old abbey which has dipped its feet in Dublin Bay for ages, and vast estates in Derry and Donegal, away in the far north.

Why the Pirate Earl? Because both his houses are on the sea; because his claret, which is of the best and poured forth like water, is brought in his own yacht from the Isle of Man, without troubling the excise; because the founder of the family—Sir Amorey Crosbie, who dislodged the Danes in 1177—was a pirate by calling; and because the Crosbies of Glandore have dutifully exhibited piratical pro-

clivities ever since. Not that the present earl looks like a sea-faring evil-doer, with his sallow effeminate countenance and coquettish uniform. He is a high-bred, highly-polished, devil-may-care, reckless Irish peer, who, at a moment's notice, would pink his enemy in the street, or beat the watch, or bait a bull, or set a main of cocks a-spurring, or wrong a wench, or break his neck over a stone wall from sheer bravado—after the lively fashion of his order at the period. Before he came into the title he was known as fighting Crosbie. The tales told of his vagaries would set your humdrum modern hair on end—of how he pistoled his whipper-in because he lost a fox, and then set about preparing an islet of his on the Atlantic for a siege; of how he sent my Lord North a *douceur* of five thousand pounds as the price of pardon, and reappeared in Dublin as a hero; of how, when the earldom fell to him, he settled down by eloping with Miss Wolfe, or rather by carrying her off *vi et armis*, as was the amiable habit of young bloods. It was a singular Irish custom, since happily exploded, that of winning a bride by force, as the Sabine maidens were won. Yet it obtained in many parts of Ireland by general consent till the middle of the eighteenth century. Abduction clubs existed whose object was the counteracting of unjust freaks of fortune by tying up heiresses to penniless sparks. Some of the young ladies (notably the two celebrated Misses Kennedy) objected to the process, while most of them found in the prospect of it a pleasing excite-

ment. Irish girls have always had a spice of the devil in them. It is not surprising that they should have looked kindly upon men who risked life and liberty for their sweet sakes.

Lord Glandore followed the prevailing fashion, carried off Miss Wolfe to his wild isle in Donegal, and society said it was well done. She was no heiress, but that too was well, for my lord was rich enough for both. The parson of Letterkenny was summoned to the islet to tie the knot (it was unmodish for persons of quality to be married in a church), and a year later the twain returned to the metropolis, with a baby heir and every prospect of future happiness. But somehow there was a gulf between them. Young, rich, worshipped, they were not happy. My lord went back to his old ways—drinking, hunting, fighting, wenching—my lady moped. Six years later another son was born to them, whose advent, strange to say, instead of being a blessing, was a curse, and divided the ill-assorted pair still further. Each shrined a son as special favourite, my lord taking to his bosom the younger, Terence—whilst my lady doted with a hungry love upon the elder, Shane. My lord, out of perversity maybe, swore that Shane was stupid and viciously inclined, unworthy to inherit the honours of Sir Amorey. My lady, spiteful perchance through heartache, devoured her darling with embraces, adored the ground he trod on, kissed in private the baby stockings he had outgrown, the toys he had thrown aside; and seemed

to grudge the younger one the very meat which nourished him. This hint given, you can mark how the case stands as my lord enters the upper room at Daly's. Shane, a handsome, delicate youth, far up in his teens, retires nervously behind his mother, whilst Terence, a chubby child of twelve, runs forward with a shout to search his father's pocket for good things. What a pity, you think no doubt, for a family to whom fortune has been so generous to be divided in so singular a manner.

'What!' cries my lord, as, laughing, he tosses the lad into the air. 'More comfits? No, no. They'd ruin thy pretty teeth, to say nothing of thy stomach. Go play with mammy's bayonet. By-and-by thou shalt have sword and pistol of thine own—aye, and a horse to ride—a dozen of them!' And the boy, without fear, obeys the odd behest, for he knows that in his father's presence my lady dares not chide him, albeit she makes no pretence of love. He takes the dainty weapon from its sheath and makes passes at his big brother with it; for my Lady Glandore, like many another patriotic peeress, wears a toy-bayonet at her side, just as she wears the scarlet jacket piped with black of her husband's regiment, the high black stock, and a headdress resembling its helmet.

Let us survey the remaining members of the family. The little girl, who looks unmoved out of great brown eyes at the glancing weapon's sheen, is first cousin to the boys; daughter of my lady's brother, honest Arthur Wolfe, who, leaning against

the casement, smiles down upon the crowd. He is, folks say, a lawyer of promise, though not gifted. Rumour even whispers that if Fitzgibbon should become lord chancellor, Mr. Wolfe would succeed to the post of attorney-general. Not by reason of his talents, for Arthur, though plodding and upright, can never hope to hold his own at the Irish Bar by his wits. There are too many resin torches about for his horn lantern to make much show. But then you see he is of gentle blood, and influence is of more practical worth than talent. His sister, who loves him fondly, is Countess of Glandore, which fact may be counted unto him as equivalent to much cleverness. He knows that he is not bright, and is honest enough to revere in others the genius which is denied to himself. That is the reason why, not heeding my lord's entrance, he bows eagerly to somebody in the street, and bids his little daughter kiss her hand and nod.

My lady, to avoid looking at her husband, follows his eyes and exclaims, with a contraction of her brows :

‘ Good heavens, Arthur ! who in the world's your friend ? He looks like a grimy monkey in beggar's rags ! Sure you can't know the scarecrow ? ’

‘ That is one of the cleverest men in Dublin,’ returns her brother. ‘ He'll make a show some day. Even the arrogant Fitzgibbon, before whose eye the Viceroy quails, is afraid of that dirty little man. That is John Philpot Curran, M.P. for Kilbeggan, who has just taken silk. The

staunchest, worthiest, wittiest, ugliest lawyer in all Ireland.'

'Curran!' echoed my lord with curiosity; 'I've heard of him. He dared t'other day to flout Fitzgibbon himself in parliament, and the ceiling didn't crumble. Let's have him up; he may divert us.'

But Curran took no heed of Arthur's beckoning. He knew that his exterior was homely, and moreover liked not the society of lords and ladies. Born of the lower class, he loved them for their sufferings, identified himself with their wrongs, and was wont frequently to say that 'twixt the nobles and the people there was an impassable abyss. Besides, though brave as a lion, he respected his skin somewhat, and knew that my lord was as likely as not to prod him with a rapier-point if he ventured on a sally which was beyond his aristocratic comprehension. Turning, therefore, to a young man who was his companion, he whispered:

'Let us be off, Theobald. The likes of us are too humble for such company,' and was making good his retreat, when he heard the imperious voice shout out:

'Bring him here, I say—some of you—shoeblocks, chairmen, somebody—or by the Hokey ye'll taste of my rascal-thrasher.'

Then, amused at the conceit of being summoned like a lackey, he shrugged his round shoulders, and saying, 'Isn't it wondrous, Theobald, how these spoilt pets of fortune rule us!' turned into Daly's with his comrade, and was ushered up the stairs.

Mr. Wolfe gave a hand to each of the new-comers, and presented them to his sister. 'Mr. Curran's name is sufficient passport to your favour,' he said, in his gentle way. 'This young man is my godson and *protégé*, also at the bar—Theobald Wolfe Tone;' then added in a whisper, 'son of the coach-maker of whom you have heard me speak. A stout-souled young fellow, if a trifle hotheaded and romantic.'

All the peeresses turned from the windows to look at Mr. Curran, whose boldness in asserting popular views was bringing him steadily to the front, while his intimacy with Grattan (the popular hero) caused him to be treated with a respect which his mean aspect hardly warranted. In person he was short, thin, ungraceful. His complexion had the same muddy tinge which distinguished Dean Swift's, and his hair lay in ragged masses of jet black about his square brows, unrestrained by bow or ribbon. His features were coarse and heavy in repose, but when thought illumined his humorous eye there was a sudden gush of mind into his countenance which dilated every fibre with the glow of sacred fire. As a companion he was unrivalled both as wit and *raconteur*, which may account for my lord's sudden whim of civility to the low-born advocate; but there was also a profound undercurrent of melancholy (deeper than that which is common to all Irishmen) which seemed to tell prophetically of those terrible nights and days, as yet on the dim horizon of coming years, when he should wrestle hand to hand with Moloch for the

blood of his victims till sweat would pour down his forehead and his soul would faint with despair. By God's mercy the future is a closed book to us; and Curran knew not the agony which lay in wait for him, though even now he was suspicious of the joy that intoxicated Dublin.

'Well, gentlemen,' remarked his lordship, amiably; 'this is a glorious day for Ireland, is it not? Her sons have united. She stands redeemed and disenthralled. The work is nearly finished. Thanks to Mr. Grattan and the Bishop of Derry, we are once more a nation. I vow it is a pretty sight.'

'How long will it last?' asked Curran, with a dubious headshake. 'That gorgeous bishop is a charlatan, I fear. We're only a ladder in his hand, to be kicked over by-and-by. All this is hollow, for in the hubbub the real danger is forgotten.'

'To unwind a wrong knit up through many centuries is no easy matter,' assented Arthur Wolfe.

'It's done with, and there's an end of it,' decided his lordship, who was not good at argument. 'If the parliament submits with grace to the new *régime*, then we shall have all we want.'

'There's the Penal Code still,' returned Curran, shaking his head, while Theobald, his young companion, sighed. 'Four-fifths of the nation remains in slavery. The accursed Penal Code stands yet, with menace at the cradle of the Catholic, with threats at his bridal bed, with triumph beside his coffin. I can hardly expect your lordship to join in

my indignation, for you are a member of the Protestant Englishry, and as such look with contempt on such as we. The relation of the victorious minority to the vanquished majority remains as disgracefully the same as ever. It is that of the first William's followers to the Saxon churls, of the cohorts of Cortès to the Indians of Peru. Depend upon it, that till the Catholics are emancipated from their serfdom there can be no real peace for Ireland.'

Theobald, whom his godfather had charged with a tendency to romance, here blurted out with the self-sufficiency of youth, 'United! of course not. How can a work stand which will benefit the few and not the many? This movement is for a faction, not for a people. Look at that statue there, with the idiots marching round it! It is the accepted symbol of a persecution as vile as any that disgraced the Inquisition! I'd like to drag it down. It's a Juggernaut that has crushed our spirit out. The Volunteers have set us free, have they? Yet no Catholic may carry arms, no Catholic may hold a post more important than that of village rat-catcher; no Catholic may publicly receive the first rudiments of education. If he knows how to read he has picked up his learning under a hedge, in fear and trembling; he's on the level of the beast; yet has he a soul as we have, and is, besides, the original possessor of the soil!'

The young man (pale-faced he was, and slight of build) stopped abruptly and turned red, for my lady's look was fixed on him with undisguised displeasure.

‘I beg pardon,’ he stammered, ‘but I feel strongly——’

‘Are you a Roman Catholic?’ she asked.

‘No,’ replied her brother for him, as he patted the scapegrace on the shoulder. ‘But he is bitten with a mania to become a champion of the oppressed. He has written burning pamphlets, which, though I cannot quite approve of them, I am bound to confess have merit.’

‘That have they!’ said Curran, warmly. ‘The enthusiasm’s there, and the cause is good. But if a man would sleep on roses he had best leave it alone, for anguish will be the certain portion of him who’d fight the Penal Code. Modern patriotism consists too much of eating and drinking and fine clothes to be of real worth.’

‘I believe you are too convivially disposed to object to a good dinner!’ laughed Lord Glandore. ‘There’s a power of cant in these patriotic views. As regards us Englishry, the inferiority of our numbers is more than compensated by commanding vigour and organisation. It’s a law of nature that a weak vessel should give way before a strong one. History tells us that our ancestors, the English colonists, sturdy to begin with, were compelled by their position to cultivate energy and perseverance, while the aborigines never worked till they felt the pangs of hunger, and were content to lie down in the straw beside their cattle. The Catholics are the helot class. Let them prove themselves worthy of consideration if they can.’

‘The Irish Catholics of ability,’ returned the neophyte, ‘are at Versailles or Ildefonso, driven from here long since.’

‘False reasoning, my lord,’ said doughty Curran. ‘The “Englishry,” as you call them, are the servants of England. Their interests are the same, because England pays them well. How can a nation’s limbs obey her will if it is weighed to the earth by gyves? First knock off the irons, then bid her stand upon her feet. As the boy says, folks are too fond of prancing round that statue. I don’t myself see a way out of the darkness. Why should it not be given to him, and such as he, to lead us from the labyrinth?’

My lord wished he had not summoned these low persons. Before he could reply the young man said sadly :

‘What can a lawyer do but prose?’

And Arthur Wolfe, perceiving a storm brewing, cried out with nervous merriment :

‘What! harping on the old string, Theobald? Still pining for a military frock and helmet? Boy, boy! Look at the pageant that is spread before our eyes. The triumph of this day is due to its bloodlessness. This grand array would not disgrace its cloth, I’m sure, in the battle; but happily success has been achieved by moral force alone. Right is might with the Volunteers. May their swords never leave their scabbards!’

‘You cannot deny,’ persisted the froward youth, ‘that yonder battalions would be a grander sight if

they really represented the nation without regard to creed—if, for example, every other man among them was a Catholic !’

My lord looked cross, my lady black as thunder, so Wolfe, the peacemaker, struck in again as he twisted his fingers in his little daughter’s curls.

‘I agree that it is monstrous,’ he said, with hesitation, ‘that three million men with souls should be plough-horses for conscience’ sake. In these days it’s a scandal. Sister, you must admit that. Perhaps we are entering on a better time. A reformed parliament, if you can get it, will no doubt emancipate the Catholics. You are a hare-brained lad, my godson ; but here is a Catholic little girl who shall thank you. Doreen, my treasure, you may shake hands with Theobald.’

My lord waxed peevish, and drummed his fingers on the shutters and yawned in the face of Curran, for he sniffed in the wind a quarrel which would bore him. If folks would only refrain, he thought, from gabbling about these Catholics, what a comfort it would be. My lady, usually disagreeable, was threatening a scene ; for they had got on the one subject which set all the family agog. Her spouse wished heartily that she would retire to the family vault, or be less ill-tempered ; for what can be more odious than a snappish better-half ?

Religious differences had set the country by the ears ever since the Reformation, turning father against son, kinsman against kinsman ; and this especial family was no exception to the rule. Lady

Glandore hated the Papists with all the energy of one whose soul is filled with gall, and who lacks a fitting outlet for its bitterness. What must then have been her feelings when, ten years before the opening of this chronicle, her only brother, whom she loved, thought fit to wed a Catholic? It was a weak, faded chit of a thing who lived for a year after her marriage in terror of my lady, gave birth to a daughter and then died. The countess, who had endured her existence under protest, was glad at least that she was well behaved enough to die; some people said indeed that she had frightened Arthur's submissive wife into her untimely grave. Be this as it may, the incubus removed, my lady girded up her loins for the effacing of the blot on the escutcheon. The puling slut was gone—that was a mercy. Why had she not proved barren? There was still a way of setting matters straight. Little Doreen must be washed clean from Papist mummeries, and received into the bosom of THE Church, and the world would forget in course of time how the young lawyer, usually as soft as wax, had flown in the face of his belongings. To her horror and amazement Arthur for once proved adamant—he who had always given way rather than break a lance in the lists—sternly commanding his sister to hold her tongue. His Papist wife, whom he regretted sorely, had exacted a promise on her deathbed that Doreen should be brought up in her mother's faith, and a Papist Doreen should be, he swore, at least till she arrived at an

age to settle the question for herself. He would be glad though, he continued, seeing with pain how shocked my lady looked, if in her sisterly affection she would lay prejudice aside and help to rear the child; for the sharpest of men, as all the world knows, is no better than a fool in dealing with babies. And so it befell that the Countess of Glandore, the haughty chatelaine who scoffed at 'mummeries' and worshipped King William as champion of the Faith, nourished a scorpion in her bosom for Arthur's sake, and permitted the little scarlet lady to consort with her own lads. My lady's hatred of the national creed had a more bitter cause even than class prejudice. She had a private and absorbing reason for it, more feminine than theological. That reason was—a woman, and a rival—a certain Madam Gillin, widow of a small shopkeeper, with whom the rakish earl chose to be too familiar. Vainly she had swallowed her pride to the extent of begging him to respect his wife in public. He had called her names, bidding her mind her distaff; then had carried in mischief the story to his love, who set herself straightway to be revenged upon my lady.

'The stuck-up bit of buckram's a half-caste at the best!' she had exclaimed. 'She forgets that a Cromwellian trooper was her ancestor, whilst I can trace my lineage from a race of kings. The blood of Ollam Fodlah's in my veins. My forefathers were reigning princes before Anno Domini was thought of, and received baptism at the hands of St. Columba before Erin was a land of bondage. It is seldom

that one of my faith can bring sorrow on one of hers ; and, please the pigs, I'll not miss my opportunity.'

And indeed Madam Gillin showed all a woman's ingenuity in torturing another. She dragged my lord, who was nothing loth, at her kirtle strings, all through Dublin ; paraded him everywhere as her own chattel ; kept him dangling by her side at *ridottos* and masquerades, till my lady, whose mainspring was pride, dared not to show her face at Smock Alley or Fishamble Street, or even on the public drive of Stephen's Green, for fear of being insulted by this Popish hussy. She strove to find comfort in her family, as many an outraged woman does, but that was worse than all ; for she looked with groaning on her eldest born, whom his father could not endure, then at that rosy, chubby younger one, and loathed him. Truly the life of the Countess of Glandore was as bran in the mouth to her, despite the wealth of my lord, his great position, and his influence. No wonder if there was an expression of settled weariness about those handsome eyes and peevish lines about her jaded mouth.

My lord drummed his white fingers impatiently—the dry-skinned fingers that mark the libertine—because of all things he hated being bored, and knew that religious discussions would bring reproaches anent Gillin. It was with relief that he beheld a gay coach half-filled with flowers, swaying in the crowd below, which contained the graces *en titre* of Dublin, Darkey Kelly, Peg Plunkett, and Maria Llewellyn

—over-painted, over-feathered, over-dressed, like a *parterre* of full-blown peonies. Their apparition caused a diversion at the windows. All the peeresses stared stonily through gold-rimmed glasses as the trio passed with the calm impertinence of high-born fine ladies, for it stirreth the curiosity of the most *blasée* Ariadne to mark what manner of female it is who hath robbed her of her Theseus. My lord roared with laughter to see the sorry fashion in which the houris bore the ordeal, vowing 'fore Gad that he must go help them with his countenance; for there is naught so discomfiting to a fair one who is frail as a public display of contempt from one who is not. Out he sallied, therefore, drawing his sword as a hint for the scum to clear a passage; but, ere he could reach the Graces, they were borne away by the stream, and their coach had made way for a noddie, in which sat a comely woman, with bright mouse-like eyes, and a complexion of milk and roses. When the new-comer observed my lord buffeting in her direction, her lips parted in a gratified smile, and she cast a glance of triumph at the club-house; for she knew that at a window there a certain high nose might be discerned, which set her teeth on edge—set in a white scornful face, whose aspect made her blood to boil.

‘That woman again!’ my lady was heard to murmur, as she abruptly quitted her place. ‘The globe’s not large enough for her and me. I hate the baggage!’

Mr. Curran, who, if untidy and unkempt, was a

man of the world and shrewd withal, tried a little joke by way of clearing the sulphur from the atmosphere ; but it fell quite flat, and he looked round with a wistful air of apology as a dog does that has wagged his tail inopportunately.

‘Let’s be off, Theobald,’ he suggested. ‘Whatever can the Volunteers be doing? Why does their return procession tarry? They should be here by this, for ’tis past three. Ah, here’s Fitzgibbon, the high and mighty Lucifer, who’d wipe his shoes upon us if he dared. Maybe he brings us news.’

Instinctively everybody made way for Fitzgibbon, the brilliant statesman who already swept all before him. Even his enemies admitted his ability, whilst deploring his flagrant errors. In his fitful nature good and evil were ever struggling for the mastery. Was he destined to achieve perennial fame, or doomed to eternal obloquy? Liberal, hospitable, munificent, he was ; but unscrupulous to boot, and arrogant and domineering. A man who must become a prodigious success, or an awful ruin. For him was no middle path. Which was it to be? Opinion was divided ; but as at present his star was in the ascendant, his foes were outnumbered by his friends.

This man who aspired to be chancellor, and as such to direct the Privy Council, was dark, of middle height, with a sharp hatchet face and oblique cast of eye. No one could be pleasanter or more flashy than Fitzgibbon if he chose, for he

united the manners of a grand seigneur with some culture, and could keep his temper under admirable control. But he preferred always to browbeat rather than conciliate, though he was a master of diplomacy, if such became worth his while. On the present occasion he strode hastily into the room as though Daly's was his private property, and, with a polished obeisance to the peeresses, flourished a perfumed kerchief.

'It's all over for the present,' he cried, with a harsh chuckle. 'The fatuous fools have postponed their grand coup till to-morrow, not perceiving that dissension is already at work among them. Oh, these Irish! They are only fit to burrow in holes and dig roots out of the earth. There is no keeping them in unison for two consecutive minutes. The sooner England swallows them the better, the silly donkeys!'

'I believe your honour is an Irishman?' asked Curran, dryly.

'Bedlamites, one and all, who crave for the impossible. I've no patience with them.' Here Mr. Fitzgibbon helped himself to a pinch from my lady's snuffbox.

'Bedad, ye're right,' sneered Curran. 'We're absurd to pretend to a heart and ventricles all to ourselves. We should be grateful—mere Irish—to be by favour the Great Toe of an empire!'

'England has always betrayed us!' cried out young Tone, the neophyte. 'Knowing we're hungry, she throws poisoned bones to us. The only way to

set right our parliament will be to break with England altogether !’

The bold sentiment set all the peeresses tittering. They cackled of freedom, and were bedizened in smart uniforms ; yet were there few of these noble ladies whose hearts were really with the new crusade. It was vastly diverting to hear this David attacking the great Goliath. They settled their skirts to see fair play ; but Fitzgibbon for once was ungallant.

‘Your godson, isn’t it, Wolfe?’ he remarked carelessly. ‘Send for the child’s nurse that he may be put to bed.’

He could not sweep Curran aside in this magnificent fashion, so he elected to be unaware of his presence. He disliked the little advocate because he feared him. Yes, the would-be aristocrat was mortally afraid of the plebeian—a privilege which he accorded to few men on earth. The two had risen at the Bar side by side, till the influence which Fitzgibbon could command gave him an advantage which his undoubted talent enabled him to keep. With sure and steady progress he forced himself above his fellows, and won the adulation which accompanies success. It was his crumpled roseleaf that Curran should be keen enough to gauge his real value ; that he should despise him as a mountebank, that he should read within his heart that personal ambition was his motive-spring, not love of country. As it happened, Curran was a master of invective, and no niggard of his shafts ; so Fitzgibbon tried flattery, and got jeered at for his

pains, which produced a hurricane of sarcasm. It was with rage that he accepted at last a fact. If there was one person who could stop his soaring Pegasus in full career, that man was common-looking Curran. So the arrogant candidate for honours marked out his enemy as one who must be watched, and if possible circumvented; and the more he watched the more he detested that odious little creature.

He did not choose therefore to take umbrage at his taunts; but, mindful of the adage that to be an-hungered is to be cross, announced that a collation awaited the pleasure of their ladyships. Now patriotism is one thing, and fine clothes another; but there are times when cold beef will bear the palm from either. So was it on this occasion. The peeresses rose up with unromantic unanimity at the mere mention of cold beef, seizing each the arm of the nearest gentleman; and so Curran and his young friend, being unable to escape, found themselves standing presently before a well-furnished board, hemmed in on either side by a lady of high rank.

The showy Fitzgibbon was master of the situation, for Curran was not a lady's man, and the neophyte in such noble company was sheepish. His harsh voice rose unchallenged in polished periods as he explained between two mouthfuls the mess the Volunteers were making. Curran smiled at his imprudence; for was he not flinging dirt at the popular idol—that glittering national army which

had worked such miracles; whose many-coloured uniforms sparkled in every street, on the very backs of the dainty dames who looked up at him surprised?

‘No good will come of it,’ cried the contemptuous great man, as he waved a silver tankard. ‘They are acting illegally; are pausing before they dare to overthrow constitutional authority, as the regicides did before they chopped off Charles’s head. A little ham, my lady? No? Do, to please me. Will you, my dear Curran? Just a little skelp? Pray do, for you look as if you’d eat me raw; and that young man too. I vow he is a cannibal. What was I saying? He who vilifies those who are in power is sure of an audience, you know. Positively, this regeneration scheme is laughable, quite laughable!’

‘Stop your friend,’ said some one to Curran, ‘or there’ll be swords drawn before the ladies;’ to which the other answered, ‘Friend! No friend of mine, or indeed of any one except himself, the maniac incendiary! Ask Arthur Wolfe. Perhaps he will interfere.’

But Fitzgibbon was not acting without a purpose. He ate his ham with studied nonchalance, shaking back his ruffles with unrivalled grace; and he at least was sorry when an unexpected circumstance occurred which withdrew the attention of his audience from himself and his insidious talk.

There was a mighty noise without which shook the windows. The undergraduates, hearing that the battle was postponed, poured forth from their

gallery in the Commons with the fury of a pent-up river suddenly let loose. They had wasted their time and energies. Their lithe young limbs were cramped. Something must be done to set the blood dancing through their veins again. What did they behold as they dashed out into the street? Peg Plunkett and her companions flirting with soldiers—not Volunteers, but actually English soldiers, members of the Viceroy's bodyguard. It must never be said that Irish Phrynes gave their favours to English soldiers—at such a time too! Fie on them for graceless harlots! Their feathers should be plucked out—they should be ducked—the English Lotharios should be well drubbed—driven back to the Castle with contumely and bloody noses. Hurrah! Pack a stone in the sleeve and have at them, the spalpeens! It was well for the Viceroy that he went home when he did, without strutting, as he proposed to do, once more round Juggernaut; or he would certainly have been assaulted by the mischievous collegians, and a serious riot would have been the consequence. But Darkey Kelly and Maria Llewellyn! Pooh! it served them right, and no one pitied them. At all events, the peeresses (mothers of the lads) said so, as they leisurely returned to the discussion of cold beef and politics. They were too well broken to street brawls to care much about a stampede of college youths. But that Fitzgibbon should presume to attack the national army was too bad, and touched them home. None of them dared admit that

English gold was more precious than national freedom. There are secrets that for very shame we would go any lengths rather than divulge. These ladies made believe to be terribly shocked—threatened to assail the adventurous wight like bewitching Amazons ; but he knew them too well to be alarmed. If Curran could read him, he could read the peeresses ; and neither subject was an edifying one for investigation.



CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECT.



HE brief career of the Volunteer army stands as a unique example for students of history to marvel at. Urged by a strange series of events, Ireland, like Cinderella, rose up from her dustheap, and was clad by a fairy in gorgeous garments. All at once she flung aside her mop, and demanded to be raised from the three-legged stool in the scullery to the dais whereon her wicked sister sat. And the wicked sister, being at the time sorely put about through her own misconduct, embraced her drudge with effusion on each cheek, instead of belabouring her with a broom, as had been her pleasant way, vowing that the straw pallet and short commons of a lifetime were all a mistake, and that nought but samite and diamonds of the first water were good enough for the sweet girl. She killed the fatted calf, and drew a fine robe out of lavender, and grinned as many

a spiteful woman will whom rage is consuming inwardly, registering at the same time a secret oath to drub the saucy minx when occasion should serve—a not uncommon practice among ladies.

Events followed one another in this wise. France, natural enemy of England, had suffered sore tribulation at the hands of my Lord Chatham, who routed her armies and sunk her ships, and filled his prisons with the flower of her youth. But my Lord Chatham's mighty spirit succumbed to chronic gout; an incompetent minister took his place, whose folly lashed the young colonies of America to rebellion, and France saw with joy such a blow struck across the face of her too prosperous rival as brought her reeling to her knees. This was the moment for reprisals. France breathed again. Quick! she said, a deft scheme of revenge! How shall we find out the weakest point? We will invade Ireland which is defenceless, and so establish a raw in the very flank of our enemy. But Ireland had no idea of tamely submitting to a hostile French occupation. Unhappily for her, she was never completely conquered, and was ever over-fond of nourishing wild hopes of independence—of formal recognition as a nation among nations. To become a slave to France would be no improvement upon her present slavery, and she had already been a subject of conflict for centuries. She cried out therefore to the wicked sister, 'Save me from invasion. Send me men to garrison my fortresses; ships to protect my harbours.' But England turned a deaf ear, being herself in a

dire strait ; bandaging her own limbs, nursing her own wounds. ‘Then,’ said Cinderella, ‘give me arms at least. I come of a good fighting stock, and will even make shift in the emergency to defend myself.’ Here were the horns of a dilemma. Unarmed and undefended, Ireland would of a surety fall an easy prey to France, which would be a serious mishap indeed. On the other hand, deliberately to place a weapon in the grasp of a young sister whom we have wronged and hectorred all her life, and who ominously reminds us that though slavery has curbed her spirit she comes of a good fighting stock, is surely rash. Forgiveness of injuries savours too much of heaven for mere daughters of earth, and it is more than probable that, having repulsed the invader, this child of warlike sires will seize the opportunity to smite us under our own fifth rib. However, there was nothing for it but to risk that danger ; so England sent over with a good grace a quantity of arms, and secretly vowed to whip the naughty jade on a later day for having been the innocent cause of the difficulty.

That which Britain feared took place. For six hundred years she had persistently been sowing dragons’ teeth in the Isle of Saints, and perseveringly watering them with blood ; and lo, in a night, they rose up armed men—a threatening host of warriors, who with one voice demanded their just rights, unjustly withheld so long. England bit her lips, and parleyed. She felt herself the laughing-

stock of Europe, and her humiliation was rendered doubly acute by the dignified bearing of the new-born battalions. They did not bully; they did not revile. They calmly claimed their own, with the least little click of a well-polished firelock, the slightest flutter of a green silk banner. 'To suit your own selfish ends,' they declared, 'you have robbed us of our trade and suborned our legislature. Give us back our trade; permit us to reform our senate. You have stripped us of our commerce piecemeal. Return it, to the last shred. In the days of the first Tudor, when you were strong and we were weak, a decree of Sir E. Poyning's became law, whereby we were to be ruled henceforth from distant London. The operation of all English statutes was to extend to Ireland; the previous consent of an English Council was necessary to render legal acts passed at home. By the 6th of George III. this was made absolute; the Irish senate was decreed to be a chapel of ease to that of Westminster. When we were weak our gyves were riveted tightly upon our legs. Now our conditions are reversed; yet claim we nothing but our own. Bring forth the anvil and the hammer. Strike off with your own hand these fetters, for we will wear no bonds but those of equal fellowship. Give us a free constitution and free trade, and let bygones be bygones.'

Attentive Europe admired the position of Ireland at this moment. A change was creeping across the world of which this situation was a natural result.

A cloud, like a man's hand, had arisen on the horizon of America, which in time was to overshadow the globe. A warlike fever possessed the Irish people. They became imbued with an all-engrossing fervour, an epidemic of patriotism. The important question was, could they keep it up? Irish veterans, who had fought under Washington, returned home invalided, to thrill their audience by the peat fire with tales that sounded like fairy lore of Liberty and Fraternity and Freedom of Conscience; to whisper that their country was a nation, not a shire; that an end must be put to bigotry, that accursed twin-sister of religion; that if the King of England wished to rule the Isle of Saints, he must do so henceforth by right of his Irish, not his English, crown, governing each kingdom by distinct laws according to its case.

High and low were stricken with the new enthusiasm; some generously, some driven by shame to assume a virtue which they had not. Laird, squire, and shopkeeper—all donned the Volunteer uniform. All looked, or affected to look, to the eagle of America as a symbol of a new hope. A race of serfs were transformed into a nation of soldiers. Many really thought themselves sincere who fell away when their own interests became involved.

And this sudden upheaving was at first without danger to the body politic. The French Revolution, with its overturning of social grades, had yet to come. Classes found themselves for a brief space thrown together, between whom usually a great gulf

was fixed, and the temporary commingling was, by giving a new direction to the mind, for the mutual benefit of both. The very singularity of such a state of things (in an age before democratic principles began to obtain) showed a seriousness of purpose which caused the ruling spirits of the new military association to carry all before them by the impetus of self-respect. Their mother had suffered bitterly and long; no one denied that. The time was come for her rescue. The task was arduous, but the cause was excellent. It behoved her sons then to raise their minds above the trammels of the earth—to become Sir Galahads—for was not their task to the full as pious as the mystic quest after the Grail? It behoved them, while the holy fervour lasted (alas! man is unstable at the best, and the Irishman more so than most), to set their house thoroughly in order, and the powerless English Cabinet from across the Channel watched the operation with anxiety.

When a wedge is inserted in so unnatural a bundle as this was, it will speedily fall asunder, and that which was a formidable coalition will be reduced to a ridiculous wreck. Who was to insert the wedge? Would time alone do it, or would perfidious aid from London be required? That it should be inserted somehow, was decided *nem. con.* in London.

Alas! in the moment of supreme triumph, whilst the Volunteers caracole so bravely down Sackville Street, we may detect grave symptoms of danger,

which argus-eyed England scans with hope, while the Viceroy is laughing in the Castle.

Ireland had during ages been the butt of fortune. A train of English kings had entreated her evilly, and the native bards reviewed the sad story with untiring zeal.

First they sang of Norman thieves—turbulent barons who, troublesome at home, were despatched to get rid of superfluous energy at the expense of Keltic princes. They slurred over the reign of the first Edward, for with him came a deceptive ray of hope. He threatened to visit the island in person. Had he done so, he would have quelled the Irish thoroughly, as he did the Welsh, and so have nipped their delusive dream of freedom in the bud. The most aristocratic race in the world would have become loyal, for they would have seen the face of their lord, and the face of royalty is as a sun unto them. But they did not become loyal, for they saw their lord's face as little then as they see that of their lady now. Nor he, nor any of the brave Plantagenets ever came to Ireland, for they were pursuing an *ignis fatuus* in France, instead of attending to their own business at home. Henry V. and Edward III. sought fame, which might not be obtained, they thought, by obscure squabbling with saffron-mantled savages in a barbarous dependency.

Events shuffled along in slipshod, careless fashion, till the period when crook-backed Richard met his end at Bosworth. By that time a mixed population held undisputed possession of the island—a bastard

race, half Keltic, half Norman. The 'English of the Pale,' or early settlers, had found Irish brides. They wore the saffron mantle and spoke the Keltish tongue. But the first Tudor, who had no sympathy with savages, declared 'this might not be.' He had a spite against them which he was but too glad to gratify, for in the absence of a king they had crowned an ape—or rather an impostor, Simnel. In virtuous indignation, he vowed that it was revolting to see noble knights reduced to the serfs' level; to which the chiefs replied with one accord:

'We are no serfs, but freemen, as ye are yourselves; for Ireland was never conquered, though she did lip-homage.'

The Tudor did not choose to be so bearded. 'Indeed! You were not conquered?' he said, surprised. 'I will send commissioners who shall straightway solve for me this riddle.' And he sent Sir Edward Poynings, who arrived in state, with special instructions to set the chiefs a-quarrelling.

The guileless princes received the commissioner cordially, who diligently sowed dissensions, setting race against race, by declaring (in 1494) that none of English blood might wed a Keltic wife, or hold communion with the Irishry, or even learn their tongue. O'Neil was pitted against Geraldine, Desmond against Tyrone, with double-faced advice; and, his dastardly commission done, Sir Edward bowed himself away with smiles, leaving behind the celebrated act which bears his name, and which was

as a red rag between the nations ever after, till it was taken in hand by the Volunteers.

Up to this moment the frequent bickerings which disturbed the fellowship of the two islands were concerning land or race; but with the reign of the eighth Henry, the true demon of discord woke to wave the sword of persecution over the distracted country. The Reformation, which brought so much trouble on the world, was no kinder to the Irish than to other nations. Henry, angry with a people who would not do as they were bid, drove the natives from the holdings which their septs had held for centuries, away to the wild fastness beyond the Shannon. (A sinful scheme, which is often fathered upon Cromwell, who has much besides to answer for.) He ravaged the land with fire and sword, resolved at least that it should have the peace of death if none other was attainable; and these tactics his dutiful child Elizabeth pursued, till her dependency was a waste of blood and ashes. Like her grandfather, she had a private cause for spite. As a nation, the Irish declined to be anything but Catholics; and so, refusing to acknowledge Queen Katherine's divorce, they looked on Anne Boleyn's daughter as a bastard and a usurper. This prompted her to filial piety. Hardly was she seated on the throne at Westminster, than she summoned a parliament in Dublin, and shook her pet prayer-book at the Catholics. The religion of Christ, the meek and lowly, she preached to them in this wise. Every layman who should use any prayer-book but her pet

one was to be imprisoned for a year. On each recurring Sunday, every adult of every persuasion was to attend Protestant service, or be heavily mulcted for the benefit of her treasury. Not content with crushing their faith, she let loose a horde of adventurers upon the unhappy Irish. They fought for their fields as well as their religion. One of the characteristics of her reign was a spirit of adventure, which descended in regular gamut from the loftiest heroism to the vilest cupidity. The eagles sought doubloons on the Spanish main; the vultures swept down on Ireland with ravenous beaks. Elizabeth's own deputy wrote thus to her in horror:

‘From every corner of the woods did the people come, creeping on their hands, for their legs would not bear them. They looked like anatomies of death; they spake like ghosts; they did eat carrion, happy when they could find them, yea, and one another; in so much that the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves.’

Indeed, Queen Bess left her dependency a reeking slaughter-house, in so abject a misery, that when her successor cleared a whole province to plant it with Scotchmen, the natives made no resistance, but plodded listlessly away. Is it surprising that their descendants should have hated England, and its truckling Anglo-Irish Senate?

In due course followed Charles I., who, with the ingrained perfidy of all the Stuarts, fleeced his Irish subjects, and then cheated them by evading the graces for which they paid their gold. His creature

Strafford went too far, and they turned as worms will. There was a grand Protestant massacre in Ulster, an appalling picture of a vengeance such as a brutalised people will wreak on its oppressor ; and Cromwell took advantage of this as an excuse for still further grinding down the Catholics. It was a fine opportunity to avenge the sufferings of Protestants in other lands—the affair of Nantes, Bartholomew, and so forth. He made a finished job of it, as he did of most things to which he set his shoulder. It was no felony now to slay an Irishman, whose very name was a reproach. He was well-nigh swept from off the earth. Famine and pestilence reigned together alone. Wolves roamed at will in the dismantled towns. Newly-appointed colonists refused to build the walls of shattered cities, for the stench of the rotting bodies poisoned the breeze.

It remained for Orange William and good Queen Anne (neither of whom could be expected to feel interest in Ireland) to add a finishing touch, and the Penal Code was a *chef d'œuvre*. Under its sweet influence no Catholic could dwell in Ireland save under such conditions as no man who stood erect might bear, and so there commenced an exodus of independent spirits, who flocked into the service of France and Germany, and filled the navies of Holland and of Spain. Thus did British rulers educate their dependency to loving obedience, by teaching its children to revile the name of law. Verily it is no wonder that they loathed the English ; that they

distrusted British amenities, and looked askance at the half-English upper class.

When the Volunteers determined to regenerate their motherland, there were two great evils with which they had to cope. Two deep plague-spots. It remained to be seen whether they were wise enough and steadfast enough to eradicate the virus. A rotten legislature, an impossible Penal Code. Could Sir Galahad reform so base a parliament? Would the champion dare to free the serfs from thralldom? The first was a Herculean labour, because both Lords and Commons drew much of their revenue from British ministers; the second was even a more Titanic task. Possession is nine points of the law, and the soil was in possession of the small knot of Protestants, who knew that their existence depended on keeping the majority in chains. Like the emigrants of the *Mayflower*, they said: 'Resolved, that the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; that the Lord hath given the earth as an heritage unto His saints; and that we are His saints. *Ergo*: the earth is ours, to have and to hold by pillage and persecution, and murder, if need be, just as the chosen people of old seized and held Canaan, the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey.'

Truly the parliament was a plague-spot fit to gangrene a whole body; for it in nowise represented the nation, consisting as it did of three hundred members, seventy-two only of whom were elected by the people. The rest were nominees of large Protestant proprietors who returned members

for every squalid hamlet on their estates, and kept their voters in the condition of tame dogs through a constant terror of ejection. Of three million Catholics not one had a voice in the elections; for by law they existed not at all. Like Milton's devils they occupied no space, while the Protestant angels filled the air with their proportions.

It was said of the Irish gentry of the last century that they possessed the materials of distinguished men with the propensities of obscure ones, which is a picturesque way of admitting that they were incorrigibly idle. To indolence add poverty and a propensity for drink, and you have a promising hotbed for the growth of every ill. The aristocratic pensioners were, as a rule, lapped in excessive luxury, which could not be kept up without extraneous help; half English by education as well as origin, they naturally leaned for protection towards the English Government.

The gentry, ignorant and sensual, were given to profuse hospitality, regardless of mortgaged acres and embarrassed lands. Dog-boys and horse-boys hung about their gates; keepers and retainers lolled upon their doorsteps, together with a posse of half-mounted poor relations—all of them too genteel to do anything useful—fishing for the speckled trout by day, drinking huge beakers of claret and quarrelling among themselves by night, till in many cases there was little left, after a few years, for the filling of a hundred mouths beyond a nominal rent-roll and the hereditary curse of idleness. Not

a squire but was more or less floundering in debt, and (his sense of honour blunted by necessity) only too anxious for a little cash at any price. Government agents were always conveniently turning up ready and willing to purchase mortgages and notes of hand, which were duly stored in the coffers of the Castle as a means of prospective coercion by-and-by.

With such materials for a national 'Lords and Commons,' it is little wonder if a sudden revulsion in favour of patriotism on the part of a body of enthusiasts should threaten to set the country agog. How was the parliament to be purified? That was the rub. Was it to be exhorted to virtue gently, or flogged into improvement? The leaders of the Volunteers had carried their first point with a rush. The parliament was with them, or feigned to be so. But what if the existence of the Parliament should come to be threatened? The sincerity of its professions would be put to a crucial test. Careless lords and impecunious squires babbled of freedom and cackled of free trade, because it was become the fashion and pleased the Volunteers. What cared they for free trade? That was a question which affected the men of Ulster, to whom commerce was as life-blood, and who indeed were the prime workers in this movement. The dissenting traders of Belfast had demanded a free trade, and British ministers had given way. Therefore Lords and Commons joined in the popular cry, and pretended that it interested them. The position was a paradox.

Here was all at once a military supremacy independent of the crown, and ministers in London were compelled to countenance it. It was humiliating; but their comfort lay in this. Would the Volunteer leaders allow zeal to overstep prudence? Probably they would. They might be coaxed by crafty submission to do so. If a collision could only be brought about between a self-elected military despotism and an effete but constitutional senate, there were the materials for such a pretty quarrel as might produce a repetition of the fate of the Kilkenny cats. One would devour the other, and England would gloat over the tails. The British premier made a parade of 'doing something for Ireland' to oblige the Volunteers.

With a flourish of alarums he repealed some obnoxious laws, which graceful conduct was received in Dublin with gratitude, till somebody pointed out that Albion was at her tricks again: whilst seeming gracefully to give way, she was really strengthening her own position by establishing a new precedent on the basis of the Poynings statute, to the effect that such favours were in the gift of England's Parliament—not Ireland's—and might accordingly be withdrawn at any time. The Volunteers were furious, Albion was perfidious; the Irish senate was playing a double game, there was no use in mincing matters in the way of compromise. England must distinctly abdicate all parliamentary dominion; parliament must be remodelled on new lines. In the future the senate must be upright,

zealous, independent, incorruptible; English gold must be as dross; an English coronet hold no allurements.

As might be expected, the new cry created a commotion. Patriots there were both in Lords and Commons, who were prepared to sacrifice part of their income for the general good, but they were few. If pensions were withdrawn and mortgages foreclosed and proprietors in prison, what mattered to these last a national liberty? The notion was an insult, and parliament stood at bay. But the ardour of the Volunteers would brook no dallying. Ulster, as usual, took the lead. Sharpwitted, frugal, Scotch, the battalions of the North convened a general assembly. On Feb. 15, 1782, one of the most impressive scenes which Ireland ever witnessed took place at Duncannon, where two hundred delegated volunteers marched two and two, calm, steadfast, virtuous, determined to pledge themselves before the altar of that sacred place to measures which might save their motherland or kill her. After earnest thought, a manifesto was framed—a dignified declaration of rights and grievances, a solemn statement of the people's will, a protest against English craft and Irish corruption—inviting the armed bodies of other provinces to aid in the process of regeneration.

Can you conceive anything more glorious and touching than the quiet gathering on the promontory of Duncannon? A towering fort frowns down upon the harbour, commanding a spacious basin

formed by the waters of three rivers. Imagine the simple country gentlemen, the homely squires, the traders of Belfast, abandoning for a while their vices and their quarrels, to deliberate sword in hand over the grievous shortcomings of their brethren. I see them in the gloaming, with high-collared coats and anxious faces, puzzling their poor brains over a way out of the labyrinth. The lovely land, stretched out on either side in a jagged line of coast, whose slopes had been watered to greenness with blood and tears, must haply be soaked again in the stream of war. For the last time. Once more—only once—a final sanctifying baptism which should leave it clean and sweet for evermore. They penned a temperate document—a dignified manifesto. Could they be single-minded to the end, or would discord fling her apple among them?

So soon as the delegates of the North received the concurrence of the provinces, the senate in Dublin changed its tone, for no immediate succour could be hoped from England. It affected a complete patriotism, and made believe to go all lengths with the Volunteers. Patriots—real and sham—thundered in the House, and were applauded to the echo. It was impossible to tell who was in earnest and who was not. First, said the wily senators, make it clear that we are free, and then by remodeling the Senate we will prove ourselves worthy of the gift you have bestowed. Grattan towered above all others. He spoke as one inspired, and the meshes of the web seemed to shrivel before his breath.

The army patrolled the streets, and review succeeded review in the Phoenix Park; the national artillery lined the quays. Loyalty, Dignity, Forbearance, were grouped round the god of war. All the virtues, posing around Mars, hovered in ether over Dublin. Never was a city so happy or so proud. But the English Viceroy, though outwardly perturbed, was laughing in the Castle while the ignorant people jiggled.

‘Fools!’ he scoffed. ‘The meeting at Duncannon, of which you are so vain, was but the thin end of the wedge which we were looking for. You shall be played one against the other—people against parliament and parliament against people—till you break your silly pates. We stoop to conquer, as your own Goldy hath it. A little more and you will be undone. A little, little more!’—and he was right. The Commons, with mortgages before their eyes, wavered and prevaricated. The Volunteers, exasperated, openly denounced the senate. The people, taking fire, vowed they would obey no laws, whether good or bad, which were dictated under the rose by the perfidious one. The statute-book was rent in pieces; anarchy threatened to supervene; England prepared to take possession again. But the Volunteers, sublime at this moment, came once more to the rescue. They chid the weak and reproved the strong; even formed themselves into a night-police for the security of the capital. This hour was that of pride before a fall.

In prosperity they gave way to indiscretion. Enjoying as they did an unnatural existence, for which the only excuse was transcendent virtue, it was the more needful for them to be of one mind as to a chief. But they split on this important point. One party declared for the Earl of Charlemont, an amiable nobleman of whose mediocrity it was said that his mind was without a flower or a weed ; another was for my lord of Derry, a bold, unsteady prelate, who, sincere or not, was but too likely to lead his flock into a quagmire.

They wavered, when to hesitate was to be lost. They did worse ; they dirtied their own nest in a public place. Each rival chief, in his struggle for supremacy, lost more than half his influence. Tongues wagged to the discredit of all parties. Sir Galahad, feeling that he was in the toils of sirens, made a prodigious effort to escape with dignity. If parliament were not remodelled the fire would end in smoke. *Coûte qui coûte*, this must be done at once, or England would step in triumphant, and dire would be the vengeance. All hands were quarrelling. Was it already too late ? A wild and desperate effort must be made to regain ground, lost by infirmity of purpose. The Volunteers, all prudence cast aside, determined to strike a blow in sledge-hammer fashion. They deliberately decided to send three hundred of their number in open and official manner to Lords and Commons, bidding them reform themselves at once ; offering even to teach them how to do it. And so the extraordinary spectacle

came to be seen in Dublin, of two governments—one civil, one military—sitting at the same moment in the same city—within sight of each other—each equally resolved to strain every nerve in order that the other might not live.

Sir Galahad blundered woefully! He had concentrated his attention with all his muddled might and main on the lesser instead of the greater plague-spot. 'Free Trade' had been his shibboleth, then a 'Reformed Parliament,' though how it was to be reformed he did not know. It escaped the shortness of his vision that 'Freedom of Conscience' would have been the nobler cry. Had he first freed the three million slaves from the bondage of the half million, the air would have been cleared for the disinfecting of his senate. But no. He was blind and tripped, and England saw the stumble. Well might the Viceroy laugh, while he made believe to tremble, as he thought of the Kil-kenny cats.



CHAPTER III.

SHADOWS.



S day waned, the Volunteers perceived that they must pass the night as watchmen if they wished the capital to be sufficiently peaceful on the morrow to attend to the parliamentary tournament. What the gownsmen intended for a frolic developed into a riot, thanks to the national love of a row and the complicated feuds which were continually breaking forth. No sooner had the undergraduates pumped upon the Graces and driven the English detachment into Castle Yard than they found themselves hemmed in by their natural enemies, the butchers of Ormond Quay, who owed the college gentlemen a grudge because they invariably took up the cudgels of the Liberty-lads when these sworn foes thought fit to have a brush.

The weavers were every bit as pugnacious as the butchers. Dulness of trade, hot weather, a passing thunder-shower, were excuse sufficient for a break-

ing of the peace; and then shops were closed and business suspended along the Liffey banks, as bridges were taken and retaken amid showers of stones, till one or other of the belligerents was driven from the field. It was one of the singular contradictions of the time that youths of high degree should always be ready to join the dregs of the city in these outrages; that members of an intensely exclusive class should unite with coal-porters or weavers against butchers, to the risk of life and limb. But so it was, and frightful casualties were the result sometimes; for the butchers were playful with their knives, using them, not to stab their opponents, which they would have considered cowardly, but to hough or cut the tendon of the leg, thus rendering their adversaries lame for life. Sometimes they dragged their captives to the market, and hung them to the meat-hooks by the jaws until their party came to rescue them. Not but what the aristocratic gowmsmen were quite capable of holding their own, as had been proved, a few weeks before the commencement of this history, by the result of a conflict on Bloody Bridge, on which occasion a rash detachment of the Ormond Boys was driven straight into the river, where many perished by drowning before they could be extricated. The butchers vowed vengeance for this feat, yet were kept quiet for a while by the attitude of the Volunteers; but now they sprang blithely to arms with marrow-bone and cleaver upon hearing that their foes were on the war-path.

At a moment so big with fate as this was, the Volunteers could permit of no such kicking up of heels. The dignity of the situation would be compromised by vulgar brawling. Peg Plunket and Darkey Kelly were clapped into the Black Dog, dripping wet, to repent on bread and water their having flaunted forth this day. Lord Glandore's regiment was detached to sweep the riff-raff to the Liberties at once, then to coax back in less violent fashion the gowmsmen to Alma Mater. A charge of the splendid hunters which the men rode soon sent the factions swirling like dead leaves, after which the armed patriots quietly jog-trotted towards College Green, driving their scapegrace brothers and sons before them with flat of sword and many a merry jest. The affair was so good-humoured that the lads did not look on it as serious. They had been commanded to drop stones and fling shillalaghs into the water, and had been compelled to obey the mandate; but their door-keys remained to them—heavy keys which, slung in kerchiefs, were formidable weapons—and they valiantly decided upon just another sally before being shut up, if only to show how game they were. Upon turning into Dame Street from the quay, behold!

no other woman, of churlish breeding, showy and pink and plump, sitting in a noddy, conversing with a friend. It was clearly not fair to drench Peg and Darkey and Maria and leave this one to go scot-free! So, with the college war-cry, they made a swoop at her. Half a dozen youth

clambered into the carriage, while one leaped on horseback and another seized the reins, and then the cavalcade started at a gallop with a pack of madcaps bellowing after, all vowing she should have a muddy bath. Vainly she shrieked and wrung her pretty hands for mercy. She was no Phryne, she bawled. A respectable married lady, a descendant of Brian Borohme and Ollam Fodlah and ever so many mighty princes. Ah now! would the darlints let her go! They wouldn't? Then they were wretches who should repent their act, for she had friends—powerful friends among the Englishry—who would avenge the outrage. Her cries only amused her tormentors. The more she bawled the more they yelled and whooped and danced about like demons; the faster on they galloped. So recklessly, that in skirting William's effigy a wheel caught against the pedestal and the noddy was overturned—a wreck. This was great fun. The mischief-makers formed a circle, and whirled singing round their prey. She was in piteous plight from mire and scratches. What rarer sport than this? The wench was sleek and well-to-do; it would be grand to set her floundering in the filthy stream before returning home to college. But she was right. She had a powerful friend—close by too—one whose temper was short, whose sword was sharp; no less a person than the colonel of the regiment that, with quip and quirk, was coaxing them homewards. At the sound of Mrs. Gillin's lamentations, Lord Glandore waved his

sword and thundered out 'Desist!' He might as well have argued with the winds. The phosphorescent light of menace which folks dreaded in the eye of a Glandore glimmered forth from his. With a fierce oath he spurred his horse, and, beside himself with passion, plunged blindly with his weapon into the heap of sable gowns.

A luckless youth with gold braid upon his vesture, who was bending down to extricate the lady, received the sword-point in his back, and, screaming, swooned away. A cry of enraged horror burst from all, and, like a swarm of angry bees, the boys fixed, without thought of consequences, on the aggressor. They were of his own class; their blood as hot and blue as his, although so young. What! murder a gownsman for a bit of folly? 'Twas but a frolic, which *he* had turned to tragedy. A peasant would not have mattered—but one of noble lineage! Vengeance should fall swift and terrible. They dared the soldiery to interfere. A hundred hands dragged the colonel from his horse, which, with a blow, was sent riderless down Sackville Street. His clothes were in tatters in a twinkling. A dozen heavy keys flew through the air with so sure an aim that he staggered and fell prone. One youth picked up the weapon, which yet reeked with his comrade's blood, and broke it on the backbone of his destroyer. In a trice the tragedy was complete. Ere his men could reach him, Lord Glandore lay motionless; and Gillin was rending the air with shrieks which were re-echoed from the club-house.

And now the *mêlée* became general, for some weavers who had lingered in the rear gave the alarm; the Liberty-boys sallied forth again, and the chairmen, hewing their staves in twain, belaboured all impartially, adding to the general disturbance. This was no vulgar riot now, for blood had been twice drawn—that of the privileged class—and gentlemen, fearing for their sons who were only armed with keys, rushed out from club and tavern to form a bulwark round the gownsmen against the rage of the infuriated soldiery. Thus sons and fathers were smiting right and left below, whilst mothers were screaming from the windows; and the peeresses saw more than they came out to see ere swords were sheathed and peace could be restored. They had lingered, many of them, at Daly's till past the tea-hour, to inspect the illuminations before adjourning to the Fishamble Street Masquerade; and crowded in a bevy round the club-house door as the dying earl and his distracted love were borne into the coffee-room; while the collegians retired backwards in compact order, silent but menacing, till the gates of Alma Mater opened and clanged to on them.

The peeresses had bawled as loud as Madam Gillin, and now cried with one voice for pouncet-boxes. The one of their order whom the tragedy chiefly concerned uttered never a word. With dry eye and distended nostril my lady looked on the prostrate figures—the still one of her lord—the picturesquely hysterical form of the hated Gillin—

and bit her white lip as the frown, which was become habitual, deepened on her face. Little Doreen looked on in unblinking wonder, till her father clasped his fingers on her eyes to shut out the horrid sight from them. Members entered hurriedly by the private way from the Parliament Houses, and smirked and looked demure, and, feeling that they had no business there, retired on tiptoe. The peeresses felt that a prospective widow is best left alone, and one by one retreated, skimming away like seamews to gabble of the dread event to scandalmongers less blest than they, leaving the two women to face their bereavement and speak to each other for the first time. Strange to say, these rivals had never had speech together in their lives. Madam Gillin choked her sobs after a while and revived, sitting up stupidly and staring half-stunned, as she picked with mechanical fretfulness at the feathers of her fan. The shock of so sudden a misfortune took her breath away; but, perceiving the haughty eyes of her enemy fixed gloomily upon her, she rallied and strung up her nerves to face the mongrel daughter of the Sassanagh.

My lady—erect and towering in martial frock and helm—pointed with stern finger at the door. Of her own will the real wife would never soil her lips by speaking to this woman; but she, assuming a dogged smile as she rearrayed her garments, tossed her head unheeding, till Arthur Wolfe took her hand and strove to lead her thence. She pushed him back and leaned over the impromptu

bed which lacqueys had built up of chairs and tables; for at this moment my lord moved, opened his eyes which sought those of his mistress, and, struggling in the grip of Death, essayed to speak. His wife moved a step nearer to catch his words, but, consistent to the end, he motioned her impatiently away. The face of the countess burned with shame and wrath as she turned to the window, and, clasping her eldest-born to her bosom, pressed a hot cheek against the panes. He could not forbear to humiliate her, even before the club-servants—before vulgar little Curran and the foolish neophyte—before the horrible woman who had usurped her place in his affections. Was it the hussy's mission to insult her always—to cover her with unending mortification? No! Thank goodness. That ordeal was nearly overpast, but she would forget its corroding bitterness never! My lord's sand was ebbing visibly. In an hour at most he must pass the Rubicon. Then the minx should be stripped of borrowed plumes and turned out upon the world, even as Jane Shore was centuries ago. Ignominy should be piled back upon the papist a hundred-fold. She knew, or thought she knew, that my lord was too careless to have thought of a last testament. At all events, a legacy from a Protestant to a Catholic was fraught with legal pitfalls. But she started from false premises, as her astonished ears soon told her.

My lord, raising himself upon his elbows, spoke—slowly, with labouring breath; for his life was

oozing in scarlet throbs through the sword-gash, and grave-damps were gathering upon his skin.

‘Gillin dear!’ he gasped, with a diabolical emphasis to disgust his wife. ‘I have loved you, for you were always gay and cheerful and forgiving, not glaring and reproachful like that stony figure there! I leave you well provided for. The Little House is yours, with the farm and the land about it; in return for which I lay a duty on you. My lady will not be pleased,’ he continued, with a look of hate; ‘for she will never be able to drive out of Strogue without passing before your doors. And she must live there—there or at Ennishowen, or by my will she will forfeit certain rights. Lift me up. I can hardly breathe.’

Both Wolfe and Curran made a movement of indignation as the departing sinner exposed his plans. What a fiendish thing, so to shame a wife whose only apparent crime was a coldness of demeanour! Well, well! The Glandores were always mad, and this one more crazy than his forefathers.

My lord marked the movement, and, turning his glazing eyes towards his second son, smiled faintly. ‘Not so bad as you think,’ he panted. ‘I have bequeathed the Little House to your daughter, Gillin, to be held in trust for you, then to be hers absolutely—to pretty Norah, who, at my wish you know, was baptised a Protestant. I will that the two families should live side by side, in order that his mother may do no harm to my second child,

whom she abhors. I do not think she would do him active wrong. But we can never tell what a woman will do if goaded. Swear to watch over the boy, Gillin; and if evil befall, point the finger of public opinion at his mother. She will always bow to that, I know. Bring lights. Hold up my little Terence that I may look at him. Lights! It is very dark.'

A candle was brought in a great silver sconce, but my lord had looked his last on earth. Vainly he peered through a gathering film. The child's blonde locks were hidden from his sight; and then, feeling that the portals of one world were shut ere those of the other were ajar, he was seized with a quaking dread like ague. The devil-may-care swagger of the Glandores was gone. He strove with groans to recall a long-forgotten prayer, and the spectators of his death-bed were stricken with awe.

'Gillin,' he murmured, in so strange and hoarse a voice as to make her shudder. 'It is an awful wrong we've done. Why did you let me? Too late now. I cannot set it right, but she—call my lady—why is she not here?'

The tall countess was standing sternly over him, close by, with crossed arms, but he could not see her.

'I am here. What would you?' she said; as white as he, with a growing look of dread.

'That wrong!' he gurgled. 'That dreadful thing. Oh, set it right while you have time; for my sake; for your own, that you may escape this tor-

ment. If I might live an hour—O. God ! but one ! We three only know. If I could——’

The wretched man made an effort to rise—a last supreme effort. A spasm seized his throat. He flung his arms into the air and fell back—dead.

Doreen, the brown-eyed girl, cowered against her father and began to cry. The boys, who looked on the work of the White Pilgrim for the first time, clung trembling in an embrace with twitching lips. The two women—so dissimilar in birth and breeding—bound by a strange secret link—scrutinised each other long and steadily across the corpse, as skilful swordsmen do who would gauge a rival’s skill. They were about to skirmish now. In the future might one be called upon to run the other through ? Who can tell what lurks behind the veil ?

The countess winced under the insolent gaze with which Madam Gillin looked her up and down. With a tinge of half-alarmed contempt she broke the silence.

‘ Arthur,’ she said, ‘ take that chit away. With her mother’s craven soul in her, she’s like to have a fit. At any rate, save my conscience that. Fear not for me, though they *have* all run off as if I were plague-stricken. Mr. Curran I dare say, or some one, will see me taken care of. You will have details to look to for me. Take the girl hence. No. Leave the boys.’

Arthur Wolfe departed, taking with him Doreen and his godson Tone ; and Mr. Curran, nodding to them, withdrew to the antechamber.

The women were alone with their dead. My lady stood frowning at the usurper, who, no whit abashed, laid a hand upon the corpse and said, in solemn accents: 'So help me God—I'll do his bidding. Do not glare at me, woman, or you may drive me to use my nails. I know your secret, for your husband babbled of it as he slept. It is a fearful wrong. Many a time I've urged him to see justice done, no matter at what cost to you and to himself. But he was weak and wicked too. I suppose it is now too late, for you are as bad as he, and vain as well of your murky half-caste blood!'

Madam Gillin drew back a step; for, stung to the quick by the beginning of her speech, my lady made as if to strike her foe with the toy-bayonet; but, reason coming to the rescue, she tossed it on the ground. This last insult was too much. To speak plainly of such shameful things to her very face! The brazen hardened papist hussy! But vulgar Gillin laughed at the fierce impulse with such a jeering crow as startled Mr. Curran in the antechamber.

'Do you want fisticuffs?' she gibed, with a plump white fist on either hip. 'I warrant ye'd get the worst of such a tussle, my fine madam, for all your haughty airs—you—who should act as serving-wench to such as I. Nay! Calm yourself. I'm off. This is the first time we've ever spoken—I hope it may be the last, for that will mean that you have behaved properly to your second son. I've no desire to cross your path; you cruel, wicked, heartless woman!'

Lady Glandore, her thin lips curling, took Terence by the hand for all reply, and bade him kneel.

‘Swear,’ she said in low clear tones, drawing forward the astonished Shane, ‘that you will be faithful to your elder brother as a vassal to a suzerain, that you will do him no treason, but act as a junior should with submission to the head of his house.’

The little boy had been crying with all his might ever since they brought in that ghastly heap. Confused and awed by his mother’s hard manner he repeated her words, then broke into fresh sobs, whilst Madam Gillin stared and clasped her hands together as she turned to go.

‘Sure the woman’s cracked,’ she muttered. ‘What does she mean? The feudal system’s passed. No oath can be binding on a child of twelve. Maybe she’s not wicked—only mad—as mad as my lord was. Well, God help the child! What’s bred in the bone will out! Deary me! There’s something quare about all these half-English nobles.’

Mr. Curran waited, according to agreement, lest anything should be required by my lady; and though by no means a lady’s man, was not sorry so to do, for the conduct of the countess in her sudden bereavement had been, to say the least of it, extraordinary, and he was curious to observe what would happen next. There was something beneath that haughty calmness which roused his curiosity. Was

she regretting the past, conscious only of the sunshine, forgetful now of storms ; or was she rejoicing at a release ? Holding no clue, conjecture was waste of brain-power.

So Mr. Curran resolved to reserve his judgment, and turned his attention to what was going on without, while the servants stole backwards and forwards, improvising the preparations for a wake.

The proceedings outside were well-nigh as lugubrious as those within. A thick mist and drizzling rain were descending on the town, turning the roads to quagmires, the ornamental draperies to dish-clouts, the wreaths to funereal garlands. The illuminations, concerning which expectation had been so exercised, flickered and guttered dismally. Groups of men in scarlet, their powder in wet mud upon their coats, reeled down the greasy pavement, waking the echoes with a drunken view-halloo or a fragment of the Volunteer hymn. Some were making an exhaustive tour of the boozing-kens ; some staggered towards the lottery-rooms in Capel Street, or the Hells of Skinner's Row ; some were running-a-muck with unsteady gait, and sword-tip protruded through the scabbard for the behoof of chairmen's calves ; while some again, in a glimmer of sobriety, were examining the smirched stockings and spattered breeches which precluded their appearance at Smock Alley. Chairs and coaches flitted by, making for Moira House or the Palace of his Grace of Leinster, for all kept open-house to-night, and Mr. Curran's crab-apple features

puckered into a grin as he marked how fearfully faces were upturned to Daly's, where one of the elect was lying stiff and stark. But the grin soon faded into a look of sadness, as, like some seer, he apostrophised his countrymen.

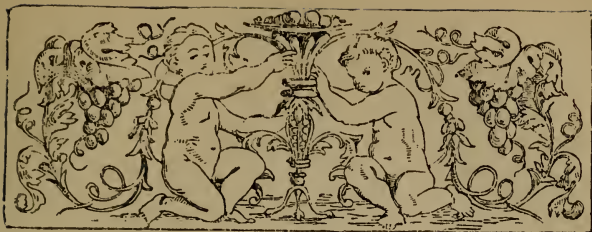
'O people!' he reflected, 'easily gulled and hoodwinked, how long will your triumph last? This is but a grazing of the ark on Ararat—a delusive omen of the subsiding of the waters. Our bark is yet to be tossed, not on a sinking, but on a more angry flood than heretofore. Eat and drink, for to-morrow you die. What was your ancestors' sin that ye should be saddled with a curse for ever? Your land was the Isle of Saints, yet were ye predoomed from the beginning; for when the broth of your character was brewed, prudence was left out and discord tossed in instead. And the taskmaster, knowing that in discord lies his strength, plays on your foibles for your undoing. How long may the prodigy of your co-operation last? Alas! It pales already. To-morrow is your supreme trial of strength, and your chiefs are at daggers-drawn. What will be the end? What will be the end?'

He shook himself free from the dismal prospect of his thoughts, for since Madam Gillin bustled out my lady had been very quiet. He peeped through the doorway. No! She had not moved since he looked in an hour ago; but was sitting still with her chin on her two hands—gazing with knitted brows at the body as it lay, its form defined dimly through the sheet that covered it.

Terence, lulled by tears, had fallen asleep long since upon the floor. Shane walked hither and thither, biting his nails furtively ; for he was a brave boy who feared not his father dead, though he trembled in his presence whilst alive. Had he dared he would have gone forth into the street to see the gay folks, the lights, and junketing, for he was high up in his teens and longed to be a man. But it would not do to leave the mother whom he loved and dreaded to the protection of Curran—the low lawyer. He was my lord now, and the head of his house, and must protect her who had hitherto protected him. He marvelled, though, in his slow brain, as it wandered round the knotty subject, over the passage of arms betwixt the ladies ; their covert menace ; the oath the little lad was made to swear. It was all strange—his mother of all the strangest. Protect her, forsooth ! The uncompromising mouth and square chin of her ladyship—the steely glitter of her light grey eye—showed independent will enough for two. Clearly she was intended to protect others, rather than herself to need protection. But her manner was odd, her frown of evil augury. At a moment of soul-stirring woe, such calmness as this of hers could bode no good.

All through the night she sat reviewing her life, while Shane walked in a fidget, and patient Curran waited. She brooded over the past, examined the threatening future, without moving once or uttering a sound. She was deciding in her mind on a future

plan of action which should lead her safely through a sea of dangers. Was she as relentless as she looked? Was this an innately wicked nature, set free at last from duress, revolving how best to abuse its liberty; or was it one at bottom good, but prejudiced and narrow, chained down and warped awry, and dulled by circumstance?



CHAPTER IV.

BANISHMENT.



EARS went by. The volcano burned blithely, and the upper orders danced on it. No court was more like that of a stage potentate than the court of the Irish Viceroy. No *ridottos* were so gorgeous as those of Dublin ; no equipages so sumptuous ; no nobles so magnificently reckless. Mr. Handel averred in broken German that he adored the Hibernian capital, and gave birth to his sublime creations for the edification of Dublin belles. The absentees returned home in troops, finding that in their mother's mansion were many fatted calves ; and vied with one another, in the matter of Italian stuccoists and Parisian painters, for the display of a genteel taste. But, as the poet hath it, 'things are not always as they seem.' The crust of the volcano grew daily thinner. What a gnashing of teeth would result from its collapse !

The Grand Convention fell a victim to its leaders, and from a mighty engine of the national will shrivelled into an antic posturing. Mr. Grattan (the man of eighty-two *par excellence*) perceived that he was overreached; that perfidious Albion shuffled one by one out of her engagements, that the independence, over which he had crowed like a revolutionary cock, was no more than an illusory phantom. The Renunciation Act was repealable at pleasure, he found, and no renunciation save in name. The horrid Poyning, the objectionable 6th of George III., tossed into limbo with such pomp, might become law again by a mere pen-scratch. Ireland was decked in the frippery of freedom, which, torn off piecemeal, would leave her naked and ashamed. The Volunteers, perceiving that their blaring and strutting had produced nothing real, looked sheepishly at one another and returned to their plain clothes. After all, they were asses in lions' skins; their association a theatrical pageant of national chivalry, which dazzled Europe for an instant till men smelt the sawdust and the orange-peel and recognised in the helmet a dishcover. During all this vapouring and trumpeting, England had held her own, by means of the subservient Lords and the heavily mortgaged Commons. The parliament, too base for shame, smiled unabashed; the Volunteers, conscience-smitten and in despair, broke up and fell to pieces. The Catholics were as much serfs as ever. Derry, whose conscience was troubled with compunctious visitings, went so far

as to propose that the Catholics (burning source of trouble in all altercations) should emigrate *en masse* to Rome as a bodyguard for his Holiness; but the latter, dreading an incursion of three million savages, which would have been like an invasion of the Huns, declined with thanks the present, and the laudable scheme was given up.

Far-sighted folks became aware that the pretty tricks of the puppets were due to an English punchinello. The fantoccini did credit to their machinist, who was skilful at pulling of wires. Who was he? Why, Mr. Pitt the younger, who would have his dolls jump as he listed, though they should come to be shattered in the jumping. Mr. Pitt, the British premier, set his wits to work to keep all grades and classes squabbling. At one time, to exasperate the Papists, he gave an extra twist to the penal screw; at another, he untwisted it suddenly to anger the Orangemen. Coercion and relief were two reins in his skilled hands wherewith he sawed the mouth of poor rawboned Rosinante, till the harried animal came down upon its haunches. He established a forty-shilling franchise which gave votes to the poorest, most ignorant, and most dependent peasantry in Europe. This he declared was the divine gift of liberty. Nothing of the sort. It merely placed a fresh tool in the hands of large proprietors who were dying to be bribed and charmed to have something new to sell.

Though the Volunteers ceased to be a cause of uneasiness, it was plain to Mr. Pitt that a repetition

of their military fandango must be made impossible. How was this to be accomplished? As it was, they had left behind them, when they vanished, the nucleus of a disease—a small but sturdy band of patriots, who were not to be bought or cajoled. Unless treated in time, this spot might inflame and grow contagious. How was it to be treated? That was the grave question whereon hung the peace of Erin. The honest handful saw the rock on which the Convention had split, and were humble enough to try and remedy the error. Theobald—romantic young *protégé* of Arthur Wolfe—was the first to show them the true case, to demonstrate that Ireland's harmony was England's disappointment; that the only hope for motherland lay, not in a commingling of a few red uniforms, or a picturesque mixing of social grades, but in a compact welding together for the common weal of the different religious creeds which had distracted the land with its dissensions since the Reformation. 'Till this is done,' he said, 'the Sassanagh will toss us as a battledore a shuttlecock. Establish the grand principle of liberty of conscience, bridge the abyss of mutual intolerance, stay the carnage of the first emotions of the heart! If the rights of men be duties to God, then are we of the same religion. Our creed of civil faith is the same. Let us agree then to exclude from our thoughts all things in which we differ, and be brethren in heart and mind for our mother's sake.' The words of the romantic young apostle touched his hearers on their tenderest chord,

and they swore to learn wisdom by the past, and live in amity for ever. The quick revulsion from bigotry to tolerance was not so amazing as it seems, for Theobald Wolfe Tone was but the visible expression of the spirit of his age—the abuse-abhorring spirit which distinguished the eighteenth century, and culminated in the French upheaving of '89.

That sanguinary outburst, which blew into the elements a long-rooted despotism, and which clenched the new-fangled faith enunciated in the War of Independence, had an enormous effect on Ireland—an effect of which Mr. Pitt availed himself for his own purposes with his usual tact. The principle of '89 made its way to England, where the genius of the Constitution prevailed against its allurements; then passed across the Channel, where it was eagerly received by men who were being hounded on to recklessness. The adverse religious sects which had just vowed eternal amity, seeing what passed in Paris, looked on one another with alarm. The Catholic clergy grew suspicious of the reformers who extolled the conduct of France, because the new *régime* had produced Free Thought, or rather had endowed the bantling with strength which the great Voltaire had nourished. People were startled by bold views which were new to them. The timid looked down a chasm to which they could perceive no bottom, and shrank back. A fanatical few were for going all lengths at once, and demanding the help of France to produce an Irish upheaval. At this juncture a friendly English policy—a judicious

combination of discipline and conciliation—would have allayed the brewing storm. But it was not the intention of British ministers that the country should be tranquillised just yet. Quite the contrary. They resolved to stir up such a tempest as should frighten Erin out of her poor wits, and drive her to distrust her own strength and her own wisdom for the rest of her natural existence.

Theobald Wolfe Tone—ardent, patriotic, fired by the golden thoughts of youth, and bursting with Utopian schemes—was just such a catspaw as was wanted. His bright earnest face beamed with the rays of truth; his pure life compelled respect; his rapt eloquence lured many to his side, despite the warnings of their judgment. Though a Protestant, he was scandalised by the Penal Code. He wandered like a discontented young Moses among his enslaved countrymen. From pamphleteering he took to declamation, and, like many another, became convinced by his own discourse. He started a society among the Presbyterians of Ulster for the encouragement of universal love, and dubbed it the Society of United Irishmen. It grew and flourished at Belfast, for all Irish projects which were bold and enterprising came into being in the north. In spite of Mr. Wolfe, of Curran, of Lady Glandore (who took up her brother's *protégé*), young Tone abandoned the Bar, and deliberately developed into an incendiary. He travelled over the country haranguing crowds, addressing meetings, demonstrating home truths, exhorting all to join the cause which should promote concord amongst Irishmen of all persuasions.

A bloodless revolution was to be organised like that of '82, but on a surer basis. Instead of five hundred thousand, five millions of men were to stand up as one to demand a clear ratification of their rights, and, really united at last, would be certain of the crown of victory. Vainly his friends warned him off the precipice, declaring that the world was not ripe for a millennium, that the heart of man is desperately wicked, that five millions of men never were yet of one mind, that even a dozen Irishmen never yet agreed upon any given subject whatsoever. Tone was infatuated with his Utopian scheme, prepared like the pure-souled enthusiast that he was to give up his all to bring about its furtherance. What better catspaw could be selected by Mr. Pitt than this artless apostle in whom was no taint of guile?

If Tone's society had been left alone, it would have dwindled as over-virtuous for this world. It must be persecuted (so Mr. Pitt determined) till it flourished like a bay-tree. Then Tone and the United Irishmen must be stamped beneath the heel, and it would be odd indeed if they did not drag their tottering country in their downfall. So Mr. Pitt sat down to play a game of chess with unconscious Theobald, permitting him to frisk his pieces about the board till he chose to take them one by one. The game was heartless, for the players were deplorably ill-matched. What could a knot of earnest youths do against the forces of established government—a government which was not

squeamish as to the weapons it employed ? Master Tone was agitating for the Catholics, was he ? Out with a relief bill, which, by bestowing illusory concessions, should exasperate the ultra-Protestants. Then with lightning-speed, in dazzling sequence, a host of contradictory enactments, such as should keep the ball a-rolling. Towns were garrisoned with English troops, armed assemblies suppressed, public discussions forbidden, the sale of ammunition prohibited, conventions of delegates rendered penal. A deft touch of personal persecution besides, and the United Irishmen would become martyrs.

Before they could fully understand this complex phalanx of decrees, Tone and his lieutenants—driven by events as by a remorseless broom—found themselves transformed from a harmless debating club into a secret society, proscribed and outlawed. They discovered, too, that an illegal Star Chamber—a threatening Wehngericht—had been created somehow to spy out their ways ; that a secret council was established in the Castle, which was garnished with bristling bayonets, and supplied with paid informers.

They buffeted like beasts in a net. The more they struggled, the more entangled they became. Then, hot-headed to begin with, they grew frantic. Must it be war ? they howled. War be it then, though you have arms and we have none. With the sacred cause we will win or perish. Tear your colours from the staff, O people ; muffle your drums and beat your funeral march if ye are not prepared

to stand in the breach with us, to fall or conquer, for God and motherland !

Fate gave Mr. Pitt a cruel game to play, but he was not one to blench at phantoms. It was a game beset with difficulties—tortuous, dirty, dark. So he turned up his cuffs and played it like the bold man he was, without flinching ; in an age, too, when the end was acknowledged to justify the means. The crime which he had to commit was of his master's ordering, and must lie at his door—at the door of good King George, that well-meaning stupid boor. On his shoulders and no others must be laid the horrors of '98—of that hideous carnival which, though it took place but eighty years ago, stands without rival in the annals of human wickedness. Some, maybe, will hope that this chronicle is overdrawn. Unhappily it is not so. There is no historical fact recorded in these pages in connection with that bitter time for which there exists not ample evidence. The cruelty of devils lies dormant in each one of us. From 1796 to 1800, it had full play in Ireland. There is no doubt that if Mr. Pitt had been allowed his way, he would have dealt fairly by the sister island ; that he intended a broad emancipation of the serfs, an honourable course which would have landed him on his father's pinnacle. But his hands were tied in two ways. First by the bigotry of George, who loathed with a lunatic abhorrence all opinions which differed from his own ; secondly, by the upheaval of '89, which, by overturning established

dogmas, opened out awful vistas of new danger to the body politic. The position being what it was, he cut his coat according to his cloth, accepted what he could not help, and arranged that a religious feud must be fomented to boiling-point, in order to make its suppression an excuse for political slavery.

To carry out this project he needed a trusty coadjutor; one who was crafty, ambitious, selfish, clever, unprincipled, and, above all, Irish; and this *rara avis* he found in the Irish chancellor, Lord Clare (whose acquaintance we made in 1783, when he was Fitzgibbon, attorney-general). This man he reckoned up at once at his true worth, and set him accordingly to fight the battle with the patriots. A better tool it was not possible to find, for he despised his countrymen for their unpractical romance, looking on them as stepping-stones for his own personal aggrandisement. His domineering airs had in the intervening time coerced to his own way of thinking a host of weathercock viceroys, had raised him to the woolsack, rendered him supreme in the law courts. Mr. Pitt begged this glorious creature to make a trip to London, and proceeded to open his mind to him, or rather that murky cupboard which he exposed as such to the admiration of his dolls, when he chose to cajole them into the belief that they were colleagues.

‘We have an ensanguined path to tread, my dear Lord Clare,’ he said, with raised eyebrows; ‘but it is the shortest and the safest. We must coax on these boys to displays of rashness till they shall

drive the most respectable to take refuge in our bosom. A prison shall cool the ardour of the fanatics. Gold shall be the portion of those who waver. Bloody, say you? Is not Ireland already traceable in the statute-book as a wounded man in a crowd is tracked by his wounds? A few transitory troubles—mere spasms, nothing more—and our patient will be calm. Let the jade be tied hand and foot, and we'll mop up the blood and she will come to hug her chains. As for you, my dear lord,' he went on with a familiar smirk, which warmed Lord Clare with pleasure, 'you will be a gainer in several ways. Your talents are wasted in that poky little house on College Green. We want men of your kidney at St. Stephen's, 'fore Gad we do!' and Lord Clare took the bait, and the English premier rubbed his hands behind his back. It was but a new phase of a time-honoured policy. Chancellor and patriots should be made to plunge their paws into the fire; then Mr. Pitt in his ambush would quietly eat the nut.

So the new society of United Irishmen pursued its desperate way, upheld in fainting moments by the ardour of its young apostle; and the chancellor returned home to set traps to catch his feet; and in order to facilitate his movements a new viceroy was sent over—a gabbling weak man, who would do as he was bid; whose private life was irreproachable; who in public was an idiot; who would obey the chancellor in all things; whose name was my Lord Camden.

As might have been expected, Theobald fell into the snare. His lieutenants were locked up. Un-

dismayed, he prated, with increased vehemence, of a bondage worse than that of Egypt, called on the men of Ulster to break down the Penal Code; pointed out that the oppressor was as vicious as an Eastern despot, that the oppressed was disfigured into the semblance of a beast. The awakened Presbyterians answered to his call; and, when they had sufficiently committed themselves, the watchful chancellor put down his claw on them. Tone's career was short. Very soon he too was cast into gaol, while small fry were allowed to flap their wings till their mission, too, should be accomplished. But Mr. Pitt, if a strong, was not an ungenerous foe. He respected the young man, who was made of the stuff which makes heroes. By his command Theobald was incarcerated in Newgate for a brief space, to chew the cud of his vain imaginings, and then was given back his liberty on condition of departing from the country which he loved. Sadly he accepted the boon which was tossed to him—for choice lay 'twixt exile and the Kilmainham minuet; despatched his faithful wife before him to America; and (Mr. Pitt and the chancellor permitting) called his closest friends around him once again ere he shook their hands for the last time. He stands in the gloaming now, bareheaded, to pour out a last burning exhortation to his disciples as we take up the clue of this our chronicle, whose thread shall no more be broken.

It is the lovely evening of the 12th of July, 1795. The scene a triangular field known as 'The Garden'

on the shore of Dublin Bay, from whence may be duskily distinguished on the one side the cupolas and spires of the city ; on the other, at the end of a promontory jutting out into the sea, the ivy-clad walls of Strogue Abbey, bowered in umbrageous woods. Joy-chimes are wafted on the breeze, and now and again a puff of smoke shows as a white spot across the bay, and a second later the boom of a royal salute shakes the hollyhocks and causes the little group to shiver. It is the anniversary of William, who saved us from wooden shoes. Mr. Curran—apart from the rest—beats his cane testily upon the ground, and murmurs : ‘ Lord Clare is justified in despising them. The pack of fools ! Jigging round Juggernaut at this minute with orange lilies and foolish banners ! Even so Nero fiddled while Rome burned. Will my countrymen learn wisdom ? Of course not. Never.’

The evening light shines full on the face of the young enthusiast, marking in relief the deep cuts chiselled by premature sorrow on his cheek. He is effeminate-looking but genteel, with long lank hair simply caught back behind. His thin figure appears more slight than usual, his pale face more wan, in the anxious eyes of his companions ; his hands more thin and feverish as one by one he clasps with a lingering pressure those that are held out to him.

‘ Thanks, friends !’ he says, with a weary smile. ‘ It was idle in me to bid you take the oath once more ; for having once sworn I know you will be faithful. Yet will it be as music to mine ears, as I

roam in a foreign land, to recall the solemn cadence of your beloved voices. Nay—weep not! Be of good cheer. See these flowers around, and take courage with the omen. Mark how they droop and sink—grieving together for the dying-day. A few hours of sleep and they will wake refreshed again, and lift up their loving heads unto the sun, with dew-tears of gladness glistening upon their eyelids.’

‘Oh, Theobald, what will become of us when you are gone?’ cries out Robert Emmett, a boy of seventeen. ‘You carry hope with you in the folds of your mantle. Once gone, we shall be left in darkness, groping.’

Tone shuddered, and fought with himself against presentiment.

‘I have watched over the cradle of Liberty,’ he whispered, dreamily. ‘God forbid that I should ever see its hearse.’ Then passing his palm across his eyes as if to shut out a nightmare, he said, laying a hand on the broad shoulder of a young man beside him, ‘Courage, boy Robert! True, I go from you. But here is the Elisha who shall take up the mantle which I leave a legacy with Hope wrapped in it. Look up to your brother Thomas, Robert—the wise and prudent, the sage man in counsel. Follow him as you have followed me; faithfully, truly, till I return. For I shall return, if God so wills it, I promise you. This night I sail for America, but am under no promise to stay there. I shall make my way to France, and lay our grievances at the feet of the Directory. There is

nothing for it but to amputate the right hand of England. Oh, how I hate the name of the thrice accursed ! France is the surgeon who shall do the job. I would fain give a toast before I go, if Doreen will lend the flask she hugs so carefully.'

'It is for your journey, Theobald,' was Doreen's soft answer.

'Never mind me,' he returned, with assumed gaiety. 'Let us pour a last libation to our common mother.'

A man who had been spreading his great length upon the grass, now jumped up with an oath. A giant he was ; evidently, from his dress, belonging to the half-mounted class. His big kindly flat face was shaded by a Beresford bobwig, under which twinkled a pair of roguish eyes set in a sallow skin. His buckskin breeches were worn and greasy ; his half-jack-boots were adorned with huge silver spurs ; while a faded scarlet vest (fur-trimmed, though it was summer) closed over his broad chest ; and a square-cut snuff-coloured coat, with all the cloth in it, hung from his brawny shoulders.

'Theobald !' he shouted, in a voice which sent the owls whirling seaward, 'you shall not go from us. Why not lie hidden somewhere, and direct us still ? Can we not be trusted to keep the secret ? You look at things too blackly. We need no French help, but can win our way as the Volunteers did—by moral force ; or if we must fight, can quite look after ourselves. Don't tell me. These English are not ogres.'

‘Oh, stay with us, dear Theobald!’ cried eagerly Robert Emmett, the boy of seventeen. ‘Cassidy is right. We will have no help from France—for that would imply bloodshed—the blood of our own brethren—and the curse of God is upon fratricide.’

Tone shook his head, and answered bluntly :

‘No! That was all very well twelve years since; but the day for a peaceful revolution’s past. On the heads of those who forced us to seek foreign aid shall the blood-curse be. Our omelette can’t be made without a breaking of eggs. For three years we’ve dribbled in and out of Newgate and Kilmainham, and know all their holes and corners, and dread neither prison any more. We must strike, and that sharply, but are not strong enough alone.’

‘Theobald!’ observed Mr. Curran, from his grass-knoll, ‘it’s a Upas-tree you’ve planted. Take heed lest it blight the land.’

‘We must not be led away by a morbid anxiety about a little life,’ rejoined the apostle. ‘I go a solitary wanderer, but shall return with an army at my back—and then!’ He paused, as though delving into futurity, and the prospect which he saw upon its mirror was reassuring; for with new courage he turned to his band and said: ‘Keep together, Protestant and Catholic, for *L’Union fait la Force*, and Britain will try to divide you. Come what may, hold on by one another. Thomas Emmet, old friend! as a literary man and editor of the “Press,” it is your duty to keep this before the

public. Study the tactics of the foe, that one by one they may be exposed in time. And you, Cassidy,' he continued, laying a hand tenderly on the giant's arm, 'keep watch over your too ingenuous nature, lest you find yourself betrayed. In your way you are a clever fellow, but, like most people of your bulk, unduly innocent. I speak with loving authority to you, for is not your sister my dear wife, who, next to Erin, holds all my heart? You are too servile to Lord Clare, Cassidy, who, himself an Irishman, is the bitterest enemy that Ireland ever had. Beware lest he twist you to his purpose, for the undoing of us all. You are also on too intimate terms with Sirr—the town-major—that shameful jackal of my Lord Clare's.'

'You would not suspect me, Theobald!' cried the giant, ruefully. 'I'm not more wise than others, but I mean well.'

'No, indeed!' returned his brother-in-law. 'Would to God that we had more such hearts as yours amongst us! But keep watch and ward, lest you be overreached, for you are simple.'

'My Lord Clare is partial to me, and tells me many things,' apologised the giant, with a twinkle in his eye. 'Maybe I'm not so stupid as I look, and can unravel a fact from a careless hint. As for Sirr, I don't care two pins for him; yet who knows how useful he may prove to us? He has apartments in the Castle—is hand and glove with Secretary Cooke; through him we may be able to tamper with the soldiery, turning the arms of

Government against itself, for the town-major is no man of straw.'

But Tone shook his head.

'It is ill dealing with traitors' weapons,' he retorted. 'In a passage of wits, you will certainly be worsted, for you are too open, too blundering.'

Cassidy looked demurely at the rest, with his whimsical half-smile, as though to ask whether this verdict on his character were a compliment or not; and handsome Doreen smiled back on him in her grave way as she handed the flask and cup to Tone, and twined her arm round Sara Curran's waist.

A pretty picture were these two girls—who loitered a little amongst the darkling flowers, while Tone was speaking his farewell. Doreen had fulfilled the promise of her childhood, and was now a statuesque woman of two-and-twenty, with rich warm blood mantling under an olive skin—soft eyes of the brown colour of a mountain stream, shaded by long silken lashes—and an aquiline nose whose nostrils were as finely cut and sensitive as were her aunt's. People wondered where she got her scornful look, for Mr. Arthur Wolfe (attorney-general now) was the most peaceable and quiet of men, while all the world knew that her retiring mother had faded from excess of meekness. Her aunt, Lady Glاندore, had watched her growth approvingly, for the tall supple form was what her own had been—as was the swan-like neck and head-toss. She approved and seemed quite to like her niece till she remembered that she was a Papist and a blot on

the escutcheon ; then she despised her, yet never dared to touch forbidden ground save in a covert way ; for Doreen had a temper, when roused, as self-asserting as her own, and her aunt was grown old before her time ; too old to rise without an effort at the sound of the war-trumpet.

Doreen was dutiful to her aunt in most things ; but on the subject of her oppressed religion was a very tigress. If Lady Glandore permitted herself too broad a sally, those eyes with the strongly-marked black pupils would shoot forth a cairngorm flame—that mass of dark brown hair which hung in natural curls after the Irish fashion down her back, would shake like a lion's crest, and my lady would retire from the field discomfited. Yet this occurred but seldom, and folks could only guess how the Penal Code burned into her flesh by a certain unnatural quietude and an artificial repose of manner beyond her years.

Of course she adored Tone, the champion who had wrecked his life on behalf of three million serfs who were her brethren, and under his guidance became quite a little conspirator, niece though she was of an ultra-Protestant grandee, daughter of the attorney-general, who, as such, was crown prosecutor of her allies. It may be asked, how came her aunt to permit the girl to form such dangerous ties ? The damsel was wayward, and the aunt a victim of some secret canker, over which she brooded more and more as her hair blanched. A hard tussle or two, and practically she lowered her standard. The

girl went whither she listed, and chose as bosom friend Sara Curran, daughter of the member of parliament, to whom her father was deeply attached; and who had on the occasion of her uncle's tragic end struck up a queer friendship with her aunt, which flourished by reason of its incongruity.

Doreen, from the time she could first toddle, had been accustomed to scour the country on ponyback in company with her cousins, and these rides—more frequently than not—had for object the Priory—a comfortable nest which Curran had taken to himself near Rathfarnham—where they were regaled on tea and cakes by little Sara, the lawyer's baby child. Sara and Doreen became fast friends as they grew up—the faster probably because Doreen, who was the elder by several years, was strong as the sapling oak, while Sara was clinging like the honeysuckle.

Of course Curran, whose business kept him for many hours daily in the courts of law and House of Commons, could desire no better companion for his pet than the niece of the Countess of Glandore—the daughter of his friend and superior, Arthur Wolfe; and so as her cousins grew into men and left her more and more alone, she frequented more and more the Priory, where no one mocked her faith, and where she frequently met Theobald.

Wolfe-Tone and the Emmetts met frequently at Curran's, and their large-minded talk and broad generous views seemed to her like the wind which

has passed over seaweed, compared with her aunt's narrow drone, the vain self-vaunting of my Lord Clare, the drunken ribaldry and coarse jests of her cousin Lord Glandore. So she, in her goldlaced riding-habit, had come too to the tryst that she might look on her hero once again; and for propriety's sake had brought as escort Papa Curran and gentle Sara, who, though only sixteen, was already casting timid sheep's-eyes at the younger of the two Emmetts—a gownsman at this time in the University.

Bashful Sara had relapsed into tears several times during Tone's discourse—a pale, fair, pretty creature she was, with a dazzling skin and light-blue eyes—and showed symptoms of hysteria when the patriot proposed a final libation. Not that she had any reason for emotion (such as Doreen might with more reason have displayed), being the eye-apple of a prosperous barrister who professed the dominant faith; but she knew that young Robert, whose shoes she would have knelt and kissed, was deeply bitten with the prevailing mania, and maybe she had besides a dim presentiment of the trouble which was to pour later upon her head and his. Be that as it may, she sank upon the ground now and sobbed, while Tone held forth the cup which Doreen had filled with a steady hand.

‘A toast, dear friends—the last we may drink together!’ he said; and gazed on the plashing waters, which glowed with the last gleam of the sun that was no more. ‘I give you Mother Erin! May

she soon be decked in green ribbons by a French milliner !'

Again and again did Doreen, a calm Hebe, fill the goblet, which was drained by each man present with a murmured 'Amen !'

The sun had died behind the Wicklow hills ; still the Protestant chimes brayed fitfully across the sea, though the cannon at dusk were silent. Far off from the direction of Strogue Abbey came a noise of galloping hoofs, which grew gradually louder and louder, while every man looked at his neighbour as though expecting some new misfortune. No wonder they were uneasy, for their proceedings were watched, and a new disaster happened daily. Presently Mr. Curran, established as vidette, descried a well-known horseman, who pulled up sharply in the road, and dismounting, vaulted lightly over the wall.

'Terence !' he exclaimed with mixed feelings, as he beheld a finely-grown young man, whose round face was remarkable for mobile eyebrows, a fearless eye, and puckers of fun about a sensitive mouth, 'what are you doing here ? Be off !'

'Yes, Terence,' returned a cheery voice, 'or Councillor Crosbie, if you please, since I have the honour now to act as your worship's junior. Where's Tone ? Not gone. Thank goodness ! I must clasp the dear lad's hand before he goes.'

Mr. Curran shook his mane back like a retriever that has bathed, which was a trick he had when worried.

‘Donkey! what do you here?’ he grumbled. ‘Are we not fools enough without you? You belong to another race, which has nought in common with our troubles. Take my advice, and just trot home again. If you want to be silly, join the Cherokees as your brother has, or the Blasters, or the Hellfires. Leave plotting to the children of the soil.’

The young man, who was good-looking, with the comeliness which a fresh complexion gives, showed his white teeth, and broke into a merry laugh.

‘In an evil temper,’ he remarked. ‘Gone without dinner, eh? If I am not a drunkard and a gambler, whose fault is it, sir, but yours? Who taught me that as a younger son I have my way to carve through life? Who made me choose the Bar? Who superintended my studies, and gave a helping hand? *You*—you cross Curran! and, believe me, I’m not ungrateful, though a bit more idle than you like.’

‘Then get you gone, and leave us to our folly,’ was the testy rejoinder. ‘I won’t have your mother saying some day that I brought her boy to danger, and instilled ideas into his vacant mind which put his neck in danger.’

‘Fiddlededee!’ laughed the good-humoured scapegrace. ‘You are no more a conspirator than I. Why are you here, and why have you brought my cousin if awful rites are going forward?’

‘Because I’m an ass!’ growled the other. ‘Conspirator—why not, pray? My heart is sick when

I look round me. Why should I not be maddened as others are? Do I love Erin less? Doreen belongs through her religion to the people, and it is fitting she should sorrow with them. Yes, it is maddening!' he pursued, kindling suddenly, and breaking through the crust in which for prudence' sake he cased himself, as the thoughts over which he had been brooding took form. 'What is to become of us? It would have been merciful if Spencer's desire had been gratified, and the land turned into a seapool. Our travail is long, and endeth not. Our master gives us a hangman and a taxgatherer; what more should such as we require? His laws are like shoes sent forth for exportation. 'Twere idle to take our measures, for if they pinch us, what matters it? We stand between a social Scylla and Charybdis. Poets and visionaries, like this poor fool here, work on the hare-brained people, whose craving for freedom is whetted to voracity; and, led by the blind, they tumble into traps, at which a less ardent nation would be moved to laughter. Temerity, despair, annihilation—that is the *mot d'ordre*. See if I am not a true prophet. And the luxurious nobles—do they help with their counsel? Not they! Their twin-gods are their belly and their lust. They have nothing in common with the people.'

'The French shall drive them into the sea,' remarked Tone, placidly.

'The French, the French!' retorted Curran. 'Much good may they do us! A revolution achieved

by such means would merely mean a change of masters. You live in a fool's paradise, Theobald. I can see farther into futurity than you, for I'm older, worse luck. I see a time coming—nay, it's close at hand—when a spectre will be set up and nicknamed Justice; which, if God wills, it shall be my mission to tear down. Yet what may I do with my little weight? A mean weak man with feeble health. May I be the log to stop the wheels of the triumphal car? Verily, the ways of Heaven are inscrutable !'

It was rarely that the little advocate spoke out so plainly. His friends knew that he ever regarded his country with the idolatry of a lover, that to her he gave freely all he had to give; through the stages of her pride, her hope, her struggles and despondency, his heart was hers for better and for worse; and therefore many marvelled that, actively, he should have held aloof from the patriot band. Nobody could charge him with cowardice. Terence himself had never solved this mystery, although as his junior he saw more than most of the workings of Curran's mind. He had wondered at his chief's coldness in a careless way, till now, when it became patent to him, as to the rest, that Curran's second sight beheld the possibility of state trials in the future, where one would be needed to stand up for the accused whose heart was steadfast, whose courage was indomitable. Terence felt sure his chief was wrong—the beardless are always wisest in their own esteem—for to the honest boy it

seemed impossible that Albion could be so base.

Yet the notion was grand that, despising dignities, the little lawyer should be keeping himself in reserve for a Herculean labour, that he should be deliberately laying himself out to stand by those whom others would desert; and so, to the knot of bystanders in the gloaming, the ugly pigmy of a man appeared sublime, as he sat in an attitude of profound dejection, with the sweat of strong emotion in beads upon his forehead and on the black elf-locks of his untidy hair.

The jolly giant Cassidy rapped out a huge oath, and vowed with a string of expletives that he should be 'shillooed' forthwith. The Emmett brothers fairly wept; tears stood in the eyes of the statuesque Doreen; Theobald knelt down before him on the dewy grass, and entreated a farewell blessing ere he went.

'The Lord bless and keep you, my poor friend!' Curran whispered in a broken voice. 'Whether He wills that you should die an exile, or that you should return to us with glory, God be with you! May it never be my lot to stand up in court for you! or if it must be so, may inspired words be given me to save you from your danger! Now we must be separating, or we'll have the Castle spies on us.'

Followed by many a God-speed Tone vanished in the darkness. All listened to his retreating steps, wondering when and how they might ever meet

again. Curran heaved a sigh, and was the cynical man of the world once more, with the dancing eye and whimsical half-melancholy smile, who threw all the judges on circuit into convulsions with his wit, and stirred the jury to unseemly laughter.

‘Terence,’ he said, linking his arm in that of his junior, while the young ladies, helped by the Emmetts, mounted their horses, ‘you were wrong to come here. My lady will be angry if you mix with the common riffraff. What would you say if she pulled her purse-strings tight, you extravagant young dog? The idea of one of your birth worrying himself about the people’s wrongs is of course preposterous; therefore, to please your mother, you had best give them a wide berth. My Lord Clare shall get you a snug post with nothing to do, and vast emoluments such as becomes a lord’s brother, and then you’ll be rich and independent in no time, while I am still prosing over briefs.’

Terence, in whose face the wicked Glandore expression was tempered by good-nature, was not pleased with the banter of his chief, for his cousin was at his elbow, who always persisted in looking on him as a boy, though he was a great fellow of four-and-twenty who was constantly arraying himself in gorgeous clothes to please her. A tantalising cousin was Miss Doreen to him; suggesting broidered capes and becoming ruffles when amiably disposed, which, when with pain and grief he got them made, received no notice from her whatsoever. He chose to imagine that he was desperately in love

with the beautiful Miss Wolfe, and was proud of his passion, though she laughed at him. Vainly he sighed ; yet no worm fed upon his damask cheek. Albeit he pretended to be very wretched, he was not ; for his life was before him and he enjoyed it thoroughly, and was the victim of an amazing appetite, and would probably have forgotten all about Miss Wolfe in a week (though he would have smitten you with a big stick if you dared to hint as much) if her lithe figure had been removed from his sight for that brief period. Sometimes he took it into his head that she fancied Shane, and then he was pierced through and through with jealousy, for the brothers never could get on, and the younger one knew my lord to be not only thick of skull, but drunken and dissolute too, even beyond the average of his compeers ; a fire-eater, whose hand was never off his sword, who cared more for dogs than women, more for himself than either, and who as a husband would be certain to bring misery upon the girl. Then again he would be consoled for an instant by the reflection that it does not answer at all for first cousins to marry ; and then his longings would get the better of him, as he marked the wealth of the brown hair which had a golden ripple through it, the finely developed bust, the eyes like peatwater. She was interesting, and his heart was soft. He watched her furtively sometimes in her fits of sadness ; when she sat behind a tambour at the Strogue hall-window, gazing, with eyes that saw nothing, at the fishing-boats upon the bay, as they

splashed along with yellow sails and clumsy oars upon their mirrored doubles, till tears fell one by one upon her work, like thunderdrops upon a window-pane; and he could tell that she was dreaming of her people. Then his heart yearned towards Doreen. He longed to seize her in his lusty arms, crying :

‘My beloved! I am poor, and you are rich’ (for Mr. Wolfe had put by a cosy nest-egg). ‘Our tastes are simple. I will try to live upon love and my allowance. You shall keep all your fortune to yourself—only be mine, my very own!’ But somehow he never said the words, for something told him that she would only smile, and on second thoughts he was glad he had not spoken.

It would have been wrong in her to scoff, for the proposal would have been as unusual as disinterested; but girls will laugh at improper moments. Miss Wolfe was an heiress as times went, and likely to be richer; impecunious squires and squireens were legion; and the abduction clubs not yet quite stamped out. This, indeed, was one reason why she spent most of her time at Strogue instead of with her father in Dublin; for he, easy-going in most things, was painfully alive to the possibility of finding his daughter stolen one day when he was in court, to be bucketed about the country without a change of linen till his reluctant consent was wrung to a match with some ne’er-do-well.

At Strogue such a thing could hardly happen, for

the prestige of the Glandores was hedged about with terror, and every ne'er-do-well knew that to play Paris to the Helen of the fair Doreen—to carry her off from the sanctuary of Strogue Abbey—would be to call down dolorous reprisals from her two stalwart cousins.

So, having her constantly before his vision, Terence adored the damsel wildly by fits and starts, hating her when she snubbed him, taking a loyal interest, for her sake, in the Penal Code and the United Irishmen ; and was not aware that he stood on the verge of the political maelstrom, in whose eddies so many good Irishmen had come to drowning.

Terence professed in nowise to be a patriot. He said openly that the United Irishmen deceived themselves, that they were fond of inventing imaginary terrors, that Lord Clare, though personally he disliked him, was an estimable statesman, the right man in the right place. Doreen was angry with him at times for this. Then he had an excuse for kissing her to make it up, for the flash from her grave eyes was only summer lightning. But to be accused of mercenary motives, even in banter, was quite another thing, because all the world knew that the Irish aristocracy, as a body, did not shine in the way of unselfishness, and Terence's nature was too open and honest, his carelessness as to money too deep-seated, for him to feel aught but disgust at being coupled with the pensioners. It was not true that he was mercenary, but it might easily have been so.

Who knows what might have been if my lady had not proved liberal—a kind mother? Many are virtuous so long as they are not tempted. Yes. You will doubtless be surprised to hear that my lady had worked no evil to her second son. Madam Gillin's singular office had for the space of twelve years been a sinecure. The Countess never refused him money when he asked for it, and was apparently a model mother to the youth, though she certainly showed a strong partiality for Shane, which may be accounted for by the fact that mothers invariably doat upon their prodigals, and milord resembled his father not a little.

Now Curran, being quite at home at the Abbey, knew all these ins and outs and petty details. Terence's indignation, therefore, amused him. He burst into a peal of merriment when the young man asked, tartly, what he meant by his insinuations.

'I know Lord Clare offered me a place,' he said, with a side-glance of apology at his cousin; 'but I refused it with disdain. Though he's a worthy man I don't like him, because he orders us about, and I would not be under any obligation to him for the world. My mother's too fond of the chancellor——'

'What if you were assured that he's a traitor?' Curran asked, with mock gravity.

'I'd become a United Irishman to upset him!' returned the prompt scapegrace.

'Nonsense!' replied his friend, growing serious.

‘No, no. It’s an ill subject for jesting. Treason is a dangerous pastime, which it behoves you to keep clear of for the sake of your noble name. Don’t forget that, being half an Englishman, half of your allegiance is due to the British Crown—at least so the Lords think. With us it’s different. To try the bird, the spur must touch his blood. Come, let’s be off. Good-night, boys!’

And so the conference terminated.

The elder Emmett rode moodily to Dublin, concocting inflammatory articles for the benefit of the newspaper which he edited, reflecting too, not without misgivings, upon the mantle which had fallen, unbidden, on his shoulders. Robert, his excitable brother, walked home to Trinity College with elastic step, his brain still whirling with the outlaw’s parting words. The rest were bound for Strogue, where my lady sat wondering, no doubt, what could keep them out so late. Cassidy, who was a good singer, and amusing in other ways, had been invited to the Abbey by Terence. As for Curran and his daughter, they often sojourned there, and were certain of a hearty welcome, for their own sake now, as well as Arthur Wolfe’s.

None of the party spoke as they cantered briskly by the shore. Curran was upbraiding himself for want of caution in betraying his true sentiments even to close friends. Few saw as far as he, and the very air of Innisfail breathed treachery. His daughter, gentle Sara, whose fair locks clustered like silk cocoons about her baby-face, was in an

ecstatic trance as she bumped up and down on her rough pony.

What signified bumps, when the subject of her thoughts was Robert, the dear, delightful undergraduate? She would have bumped all the world over for him, though she was modesty itself, and he oblivious that she existed. It was pleasant to think that he, at least, was bound by no rash oath. It would be a sweet task, if possible, to keep him from the toils.

Doreen rode ahead, plunged in one of her sad moods, as she thought of the future of the wanderer, who had given up all he possessed in the world to bring about the freeing of her people. Might any woman's platonic worship make good that loss to him? Would she ever see him again, and under what circumstances?

Terence read her thoughts, and was cross at her devotion to this outlaw, a condition of mind which even he perceived was not proper in a well-brought-up young lady. Of course everybody respected Tone, and liked him, too, for his excellent qualities. She could not marry him, that was one comfort, for he was already married to the sister of this great hulking giant, Cassidy, who chirruped out scraps of song as though Erin was the most prosperous of motherlands. But it certainly seemed wrong, to the sage youth, that a handsome young woman should be on confidential terms with so many strange young men. Her aunt, he knew, objected to it strongly, but unaccountably held her peace. Then he laughed,

in spite of his displeasure, at the conceit of any one interfering with Doreen—the demure damsel who pursued her calm way, enslaving all and taking note of none, as though she had taken vows of perpetual maidenhood—had cut herself adrift for the *rôle* of a Jeanne d’Arc.



CHAPTER V.

STROGUE ABBEY.



HE home of the Glandores on Dublin Bay is a unique place, perched on rising ground, shaded by fine old timber. Originally an ecclesiastical establishment, it was turned into a fortress by Sir Amorey Crosbie in 1177, and has been altered and gutted, and rebuilt, with here a wing and here a bay, and there a winding staircase, or mysterious recess, to suit the whim of each succeeding owner, till it has swelled into a stunted honeycomb of meandering suites of rooms, whose geography puzzles a stranger on his first visit there. The only portions of it which remain intact, are (as may be seen by the great thickness of the walls) the hall, a long, low, narrow space, panelled in black oak and coiled in squares; the huge kitchen, where meat might be roasted for an army; and the dungeons below ground. The remaining rooms (many of them like monkish cells)

are of every shape and pattern, alike only in having heavy casement frames set with diamond panes, enormous obstinate doors, which creak and moan, declining to close or open unless violently coerced, and worm-eaten floors that slope in every freak of crooked line except the normal horizontal one. Indeed, the varied levels of the bedroom floor (there is but one storey) are so wildly erratic, that a visitor, who wakes for the first time in one of the pigeon-holes that open one on the other, like the alleys of a rabbit warren, clings instinctively to his bedclothes as people do at sea, and, on second thoughts, is seized with a new panic lest the house be about to fall—an idle fear, as my lady is fond of showing; for the cyclopean rafters, that were laid in their places by the crumbled monks, are hard and black as iron, so seasoned by sea-air that they will possibly stand good so long as Ireland remains above the water. A gloomier abode than this it is scarce possible to picture; for the window-sashes are of exceeding clumsiness, the ornamentation of a ponderous flamboyancy in which all styles are twisted, without regard for canons, into curls and scrolls; and yet there is a blunt cosiness about the ensemble which seems to say, ‘Here at least you are safe. If Dublin Bay were full of hostile ships, the adjacent land teeming with the enemy in arms, they might batter on for ever. They might beat at our portals till the last trump should summon them to more important business, but our panels would never budge.

On approaching the Abbey by the avenue, you are

not aware of it—so masked is it by trees and ivy—till a sharp turn brings you upon a gravelled quadrangle, three sides of which are closed in by walls, while the fourth is marked out by a row of statues (white nymphs with pitchers), whose background is the chameleon sea. Directly facing these figures—at the opposite end of the square, that is—a short wide flight of steps, and a low terrace paved with coloured marbles, lead to the front entrance. The left side of the quadrangle is the ‘Young Men’s Wing,’ sacred to whips and fishing-tackle, pierced by separate little doors for convenience on hunting mornings—two sets of separate chambers, in fact, which may be entered without passing through the hall; and above them is the armoury, a neglected museum of rusty swords and matchlocks, an eyrie of ghosts and goblins, which is never disturbed by household broom. The right side is bounded by a close-clipped ivied wall, pierced by an archway which gives access to the stables and the kennels, ended by a mouldering turret, converted long since into a water-tower.

The grand hall, low and dark as it is with sable oak and stiff limnings of dead Crosbies, occupies the whole length and width of the central portion of the house, or rather of the narrow band which joins the two side blocks together. You may learn, by looking at the time-discoloured map which hangs over its sculptured mantelpiece, that the ground-plan of the Abbey is shaped like the letter H, whose left limb forms the young men’s wing, the offices,

and dining-room ; whose right limb is made up of my lady's bedroom, the staircase vestibule, and the reception saloons ; while the grand hall, or portrait gallery, reproduces the connecting bar. Five steps, with a curiously-carved banister, lead out of the grand hall at either end ; that to the left opening into the dining-room—a finely-proportioned chamber, panelled from floor to ceiling with trophies of rusty armour breaking its sombre richness ; that to the right communicating with my lady's bedroom, painted apple-green with arabesques of gold, which is chiefly remarkable for luxuriously-cushioned window-seats, from whence a fine view may be obtained of the operations in the stable-yard. The late lord used to sip his chocolate here in brocaded morning-gown and nightcap, haranguing his whipper-in and bullying the horse-boys, or tossing scraps to favourite hounds as they were trotted by for his inspection ; and my lady has continued the practice through her widowhood, for it gratifies her vanity, as chatelaine, to watch the numberless grooms and lacqueys, the feudal array of servants and retainers. An odd nest for a lady, no doubt ; but the countess chooses to inhabit it, she says, till her son brings home a bride, for the late lord sent for Italian workmen to decorate it according to her taste, and in it she will remain till the hour for abdication shall arrive.

A second door, at right angles to my lady's, opens from the hall on to the staircase with its heraldic flight of beasts ; beyond this is the chintz drawing-

room, a cheery pale-tinted chamber which Doreen has taken to herself as a boudoir, although it is practically no better than a passage-room leading to the tapestried saloons. She likes it for its brightness, and because it looks out on the garden front, known as 'Miss Wolfe's Plot,' a little square fenced in at one end by the hall, on the further side by the dining-room, while at the other end there is a tall gilt grille of florid design, through which you may wander, if it pleases you, into the pleasaunce. This small quaint enclosure is Doreen's favourite haunt. She has laid it out with her own hands in strange devices of pebbles and clipped box, with a crazy sun-dial for a centre, and sits there for hours with needlework that advances not, dreaming sombrely, and sighing now and then, as her eyes travel along the cut beech hedges, smooth leafy walls, which spread inland in vistas beyond the golden gate, like the arms of some giant starfish. These hedges are the most remarkable things about a very remarkable abode. They are each of them half a mile long, thirty-six feet high, and twelve feet thick, perforated at intervals by arches; and they form together a series of triangular spaces sheltered from sea-blasts, in which flourish such a wealth of roses as is a marvel to all comers.

Obese, old-fashioned roses, as big as your fist, hang in cataracts from tottering posts which once were orchard trees; large pink blossoms or bunches of small white ones, whose perfume weighs down the air; balls of glorious colour, which, when a rare

breeze shakes them, shower their sweet petals in a lazy swirl upon the grass, whence Doreen gleans and harvests them for winter, with cunning condiments, in jars. From time to time the perfume varies, as the wind sets E. or W., from that of Araby the blest to one of the salt sea—a tarry, seaweedy, nautico-piratical odour, with a strong dash of brine in it, which seems wafted upward from below to remind the dwellers in the Abbey of their long line of corsair ancestors.

The most sumptuous of all the apartments is undoubtedly the tapestried saloon, nicknamed by wags my lady's presence-chamber; for there, looking out upon the roses, she loves to sit erect surrounded by ghostly Crosbies whose mighty deeds are recorded on the walls, portrayed by the most skilful hands upon miracles of Gobelin manufacture. Mr. Curran often wondered, as he played cribbage with the chatelaine, whether those deeds were fabulous; for if not, he reflected, judging the present by the past—then were the mighty grievously come down. Here was Sir Amorey alone on a spotty horse trouncing a whole army with his doughty sword. There was Sir Teague at the head of his Kernes, making short work of the French at Agincourt. Further on the first earl—prince of salt-water thieves, with a vanquished Desmond grimacing underneath his heel. How different were these from the present and last Glandores, whose lives were filled up to overflowing with wine and with debauchery; whose sins lacked

the picturesque wickedness of these defunct seafaring murderers. Then, perceiving the countess's eye fixed on him, her crony would feel guilty for his unflattering reflections, and rapidly pursue the game ; for my lady as she aged grew just the least bit garrulous, and as he loved not the aristocracy as such, it was afflicting to listen to long-winded dissertations upon the family magnificence, which he declared she invented as she went along. He was never tired though, when he could snatch a rare holiday from his professional labours, of exploring the dungeons and chimney recesses and awful holes and crannies. He it was who ferreted out the long-lost secret way beneath the sea from the water-tower to Ireland's Eye ; and bitterly he repented later that he had not kept that discovery to himself ; for by means of it he might have brought about the vanishing of many of the proscribed, instead of—but we travel on too fast.

My lady sat upright in the tapestried saloon, marvelling that no one filled the teapot. It was with a distressed amazement, like that of Louis XIV. when he waited, that she stared at the silver equipage, at the pathetically hissing urn. Where was Doreen the tea-maker ? It was quite dark, and the incorrigible damsel was still galloping about the country, who might tell whither ? It really was shocking ; no wonder if milady's quills of propriety stood out, after the manner of the fretful one. It's that drop of Papist blood, she muttered ; then turned to admonish her brother as to his heiress.

But Arthur Wolfe listened without a word, for he was accustomed to his sister's querulous complaining, and built a bulwark of silence against her jeremiads. People said all his time was spent in negative apologies for the one error of his youth; and it did look like it; for he was marvellously patient in the face of her most tyrannical whims, listening without a struggle to endless sermons which prated of the woe to come, reflecting that, poor soul, she had much to put up with. Although she was reticent and mysterious to an extreme degree, Arthur Wolfe knew that her lines were not cast in pleasant places; for did not flaunting Gillen abide at the very gates, whose odious vicinity caused her to shrink as much as might be from passing beyond her own domains?

Time and this bitter pill had made of her ladyship a 'swaddler.' Like many of the oldsters of the patrician order, she grew sorely repentant for youthful peccadilloes, took to psalm-singing, displayed strong ultra-Protestant proclivities. The prejudices of a less enlightened age curtained her brain with cobwebs which excluded the daylight from the vermin they engendered. On this 12th of July she set aside, according to custom, the pearly grey which becomes her age so well, to don weird orange vestments which make her look like a macaw—she who is usually dressed in such perfect taste in a robe of silvered satin, with snowy hair in rolls unpowdered. Although she is but fifty-two, my lady is a white-haired queen Bess; and handsome

in an imposing way, which she never was in youth. The thin nose looks higher than it used to be, and pinched. The cheek is pale and marked with anxious wrinkles ; but the straight line of imperious brow remains the same, and the eyes—netted with crowsfeet—assume a more vigorous life by reason of the fading of their surroundings. The Countess of Glandore has in twelve years become an awful dowager, before whom the cottagers shake in their shoes ; for to a misleading appearance of patriarchal majesty she adds a quick incisive way of speech, and the bodily activity of a middle-aged woman who enjoys a perfect constitution. Those startled eyes tell tales, though, of a diseased mind, and sleepless nights of tossing. And she does pass sleepless nights, despite the Consoler's fanning, when the secret chord is struck. Then as she lies on her laced pillows she sees once more the sheeted body at the clubhouse, hears the last warning wail, ' For my sake, for your own—that you may be spared this torment ! ' and then she lights a lamp and reads angrily till daylight—loathing herself for what her sound sense condemns as morbidness—lest peradventure her thoughts should drive her mad. Then rising with a headache and haggard looks, she sits in the window-seat and feeds the hounds, and reflects with stern satisfaction that the odious baggage who lives in the Little House has never found joints in her armour—has never caught her tripping with regard to her younger son. Since my lord's death no spiteful unduly-elected guardian

could complain of the boy's treatment. Her purse had always been open to him ; from childhood he was rich in guns and ponies. But she failed sufficiently to consider that there was one thing for which the warm-hearted lad had pined and which she had consistently denied him—love. It is evident that we cannot bestow that which we have not to give. This reproach therefore sat lightly on her mind. The deficit in affection was made up with bank-notes, and she bred unconsciously in her second-born a recklessness in spending which his after-income would by no means justify. Her influence over him was small. Not that this mattered much, for he was a bright good-natured lad, such as give little serious trouble to their elders. He had a way of quarrelling with Shane though, which opened dread visions of possible complications in the future. Sometimes the brothers were so near the point of open rupture, that milady had to interfere, and then with undutiful fierceness my lord would remind her of the oath she had herself extorted, and she would be stricken dumb, cursing herself for the idle folly of the act. If my lady nourished old-fashioned feudal views about the conduct of one brother to another, she was clumsy in her method of realising them. Terence ignored the whole proceeding, and to prove his freedom kept the household in a constant state of simmering breeziness, which was more lively than comfortable. Shane, on the other hand, was disposed to be benignant if Terence would abstain from being rude.

There was little in common between the two, and it would have been odd if Shane had kept his temper when Terence flogged his horse-boy, though he had a private young henchman of his own. My lady looked with uneasiness at the constant trivial squabbings, and was not altogether sorry, as the twain grew up, to see that their tastes divided them, that they met less and less ; for Shane became engrossed with the pleasures of the capital, while Curran, taking a fancy for the second son, turned his attention to the Bar.

The young lord emancipated himself from leading-strings, and became a pattern Dublin buck. He wore gorgeous raiment, carried wonderful walking-sticks with jewelled tops and incrustated mottoes ; was elected President of the Blaster and Cherokee clubs, which honourable post made it his duty to fight at least one duel a week, and to force quarrels upon people whom he had never seen before. There were several established ways (as all the world knows) of bringing this about. Sometimes he sat in a window and spat on the hats of passers-by, or stood over a crossing pushing folks into the mire, or kissed a pretty girl in the presence of her male protector, or flung chicken bones from a balcony at a passing horseman in full fig. His mother took no heed of these vagaries ; the ways of the Glاندores had been imperious for generations. But in course of time an event happened which sent the blood rushing in a tumult to her heart. At a masquerade one night my lord met a maid who smote

his fancy. She was cheerful, and not too modest (his one terror was a lady of quality), with eyes like a mouse and a good set of teeth. Her mamma, a homely, buxom dame of forty, invited him home to supper, and he was as surprised as charmed to discover that the sprightly pair were his neighbours, who on account of some crotchet or other his mother declined to visit. He was received with open arms; nothing could be more jolly than his welcome.

‘Deed the space is limited,’ mamma observed, with a guffaw. ‘If ye put your arm down the chinbly ye could raise the door-latch; but, sure, a snug mouthful’s better than a feast any day.’

He remained toasting his hostesses till daylight; called in a week; stopped to dinner; was treated as an honoured guest. Madam was a Papist, he found out, which would account for my lady’s prejudice, but my lord had no such prejudices. If a young lady touch your fancy, do you ask her to say her Catechism?

When the terrible fact broke upon my lady, she groaned in spirit and was stunned. The spiteful baggage, baffled by her rival’s exemplary conduct as a mother, had hit on a new way to torture her. The damsel in question was Madam Gillin’s daughter, who had been brought up a Protestant, at the late lord’s special wish. The reason for this singular proceeding was only too clear. That low hateful wretch, who had remained quiescent till the countess was almost at ease, was still pursuing her. Of course she could not be so truly wicked as to

mean anything serious—for her own child's sake. It was a sword tied over her head to force her to grovel down upon her knees. But boys (specially heads of houses) always begin by falling in love with the wrong people. This was a transitory flirtation. Shane would grow tired of the vulgar chit. Vainly my lady hoped. Then with beatings of the breast it occurred to her, that as Gillin was a Catholic she must of course be capable of any crime. Before things attained a hopeless pitch, would it be needful for my lady to bow her haughty neck under Gillin's caudine forks? Oh! the agony of a stubborn pride which must publicly do penance! Would the ruthless tormentor exact such abasement as an exposure to her own children of the insulting behaviour of their father? Would it be requisite to crave a boon of the too jolly tyrant? Never! my lady decided that such humiliation might never be—death would be preferable. She would bide awhile and take refuge in religion, and pray that the cup might in mercy be removed.

The petty annoyances which made up the sum of my lady's bitterness were endless. She was in the habit of bestowing broken meats upon the cottagers with stately condescension, accompanied sometimes with drugs. Mrs. Gillin followed suit. There were two ladies bountiful in the field, and the dowager sometimes came off second best; for, as amateur doctors will, she made mistakes, and killed people with fresh patent medicines, whilst her rival escaped active harm, because her boluses were innocent

through lengthened sleep in the village apothecary's phials. So the cottagers only trembled and curtsied when the chatelaine called to see them, and emptied her bottles on the sly, whilst they eagerly consulted Madam Gillin as to their ailments, a preference of which madam made the most, when the ladies met over an invalid. Faithful to her rôle, she never spoke to the scowling dowager, but addressed scathing remarks to a third person who was always the companion of her wanderings—one Jug Coyle, her ancient nurse, who passed with many for a witch, whilst all admitted that she was a 'wise-woman.' This old harri-dan, who was learned in the use of simples, was established by her mistress in a one-eyed alehouse on the verge of her little property—on the outside edge of it which looked towards the Abbey. The noise of roysterous shouting there penetrated sometimes as far as my lady's chamber, yet she did not complain. It was one of her rival's thorns—one of the petty persecutions which the chatelaine was doomed to bear.

Sure the late lord would have spared his widow had he realised the worries which would come on her by reason of the proximity of Gillin. The mistress of the Little House gave excellent rowdy suppers, and entertained the *élite* of Dublin. The judges bibbed her claret, and shook the night air with choruses, whereas they only paid state visits to the abbey once or twice a year. Her nurse's shebeen—a tumble-down festering hostelry thatched with decaying straw—was no better than a dog-boy's

boozing ken, a disgraceful trysting-place for drunken soldiers, who were enticed thither by its excellent poteen. Jug Coyle's shock-pated daughter Biddy was a scandal to the neighbourhood, so recklessly did she profess to adore sodgers ; while as for mischief, there was none perpetrated within ten miles round but that red-poled slattern was at the bottom of it. By-and-by Old Jug hung out a sign, a rude picture of a chained man, with 'The Irish Slave' as cognizance ; and after that mysterious persons were seen to arrive at unseasonable hours who might or might not be United Irishmen. My lady knew all these doings, and hoped fervently that the new clients would turn out conspirators, for in that case there seemed a chance that she might sweep away the nuisance which vexed her day by day. I say *she* advisedly, because Shane was too busily engaged as King of Cherokees, to look after his property, and was only too thankful to his mother for undertaking the management of the estates.

In intervals of complaining about the still absent tea-maker, the countess exposed her views for the hundredth time, as to the enormity of the obnoxious Gillin, to her ally Lord Clare, who smiled and nodded. The chancellor was a constant visitor at the Abbey, riding over frequently to dinner for a gossip or a game of cards with his old friend. He told her the last scandal, discussed the political situation, dropped hints about the movements of the patriots, lamented the mad folly of her brother Arthur's *protégé* ; and unconsciously she came to

see things through his spectacles, living herself a retired life. Not but what she heard something of the other side from Mr. Curran; but then he seemed to avoid these subjects, while Lord Clare delighted in gloating on them. The two mortal foes met frequently at the Abbey as on neutral ground, and snarled and showed their teeth, and thereby exemplified in their own persons one of the most singular features of a society now happily died away. During the last tempestuous years which preceded the Union, members of all parties were accustomed to meet in social intercourse, dining to-day with men they would hang to-morrow, even in some cases advancing funds out of their own pockets to secure the escape of those whom it was their duty to convict. The cause of the anomaly is not far to seek. Dublin society, though magnificent, was limited to a tiny circle. Absenteeism being voted low, the great families became interwoven by a series of intermarriages, while they were torn at the same time by religious or political dissensions. If your wife's brother holds precisely opposite views to your own, and is in danger of losing his head, still he is your near relative, and as such you will save him from the gallows if you may. It was not surprising then that Mr. Curran, when at length he arrived with the rest, should have courtecously taken Lord Clare's jewelled fingers in his own with a hope that his health was good, though he loved him as dogs love cats. Was he not obliged to meet him several

times a day in the four courts, or at Daly's? The city would have been too small to hold them if they had come to open strife.

My lady dropped her jeremiad when the young people entered, for the Little House and its belongings formed a mystery which they might not fathom. If Shane chose to distress his mother by flirting with Norah Gillin, it behoved the rest to ignore his sin. Even independent Doreen, who would have liked to scrape acquaintance with a co-religionist, abstained from so doing lest she should offend her aunt. Once, when in a passion, she threatened to call at the Little House, but my lady appeared so pained that she repented the idle threat.

My lady looked at Lord Clare as if to bid him start a subject, then shook her head at Curran for keeping the girls out so late.

Lord Clare was in excellent spirits as he crossed one natty stocking over the other, and, fingertip to fingertip, began to purr over the virtues of the new Viceroy. 'Lord Camden,' he averred, 'was an angel. He was open to advice. Things would have to take place sooner or later which would make it essential that those who governed should be of one mind. The silly geese who dubbed themselves patriots had received a check by the discomfiture of young Tone, but the snake was scotched, not killed. They would doubtless find leaders, and again leaders, who would have to be crushed in turn, and Government had hit on a bright idea for the simplifying of

the process of suppression. By virtue of an English law there was a foolish rule which forbade conviction for treason save on the testimony of two witnesses. How ponderous a piece of mechanism ! The wheels of the Irish car of justice wanted greasing. Why not one witness ? One dear, delightful, useful creature, who would come forward and say his say and finish off the matter in a trice. What did Mr. Curran think of it, that clever advocate ?

Mr. Curran sipped his tea in silence, while his dusky cheek turned dun. They would not dare pass so outrageous an enactment, he reflected. They would dare much, but, with the eyes of Europe on them, not so much as that. The chancellor was drawing him out. So he smiled sweetly, and, handing his cup to be refilled, observed that as Justice did not live in Ireland, it would be folly to provide a car for her. The spectacle of an English Viceroy making believe to dally with the stranger would be as astounding to Irishmen as the spectacle of a horse-racing Venetian.

‘Lord Clare likes his joke,’ chorused the giant Cassidy, ‘but Curran won’t be hoodwinked.’

‘I assure you I am in earnest,’ declared the chancellor, eyeing his foe from under alligator lids. ‘I protest the idea is splendid. If they are bent on hanging themselves, why not give them rope ? One witness, my dear Curran, would surely be enough.’

‘Your joke is a bad one, my lord,’ returned the other, sulkily. ‘There are hundreds of idle wretches,

hanging round Castle-yard, who for a pittance would swear anything. Is it so much trouble to suborn two? Major Sirr, your lordship's jackal, would see to it, I'm sure.'

'An admirable person!' murmured the chancellor.

'If he's not a villain,' retorted his enemy, 'give me as offal to the curs of Ormond Quay. Cassidy here was reprov'd only an hour ago by one whom we all respect for being too intimate with the rascal.'

'I can only repeat,' said Cassidy, with the crumpling of skin which made his flat face so droll, 'that I care nought for him, though I should be sorry if he came to be put away as his paid informers often are—*consigned to Moiley*, as the common people say. It is important for a poor man like me to have a friend at court. I might be taken any day on false information, and lie perdu in Newgate till my bones rotted. My Lord Clare is a kind patron, but too much engaged to heed the fate of such humble squireens as I. I have no genius like Mr. Curran. My disappearance would cause no hue-and-cry. We must look after our own bodies, and Sirr is my sheet-anchor.'

The chancellor glanced at Cassidy with a whimsical expression on his face, half curiosity, half contempt, while Curran said:

'That town-major is too much considered. Beware, my lord, of Jacks-in-office, who, in the intoxication of gratified vanity, mistake the dictates of passion for the suggestions of duty, and consider

that power unemployed is so much wasted. But I'm a fool. Your lordship is laughing at me.'

Doreen, having presided over the tea-table, retired to the open window, for her heart was full of Theobald, and this chatter grated on her nerves. My lady seized the opportunity to discourse of the proceedings of the day, of how Lord Camden had marched round William's statue with all his peers, and of how the scum had looked stupidly at the pageant with angry scowls. 'I was glad to see it,' she went on complacently, 'for tribulation is good for their sins, and bears fruit. There have been a blessed number of conversions of late.'

'Some are too weak to endure oppression,' remarked Arthur, gently, 'and turn Protestant to escape from misery.'

'Then it is good that the oppression, as you call it, should continue,' returned his sister, with decision. 'The scarlet woman and her progeny of vices shall be extinguished. When people are so ignorant and brutish, they must be snatched from the fire by any means.'

'My lady, my lady!' laughed Curran. 'Your speech and your deeds are ever at variance. Your words breathe fire and sword, yet none are more kindly to the poor. Extremes meet, you know. I believe that you will die a Catholic.'

My lady glanced at Doreen, pursed up her lips, and said nothing.

'Did we not agree t'other day about true religion? It lies not in abusing our neighbours, but in culti-

vating a heart void of offence to God and man. Remember that definition, Terence, and act on it, my boy. It was a saying of the great Lord Chatham.'

'If only Luther had never been born!' groaned Arthur Wolfe. 'Christianity was good enough for Christendom in old days.'

This was an awkward subject. Lord Clare changed it with accustomed tact.

'Do you know, Curran,' he said, 'that Tone has left a sting behind him which till yesterday we did not suspect? We have reason to believe that the University, of which we are all so justly proud, has been tampered with. That's bad, you know. I am informed that there are no less than four branches of the secret society within its walls. Severest measures may be necessary. As chancellor of Trinity I will see to it.'

Doreen turned round and listened. So did Terence, for he had many friends in Trinity.

'Have you any basis to work upon?' asked my lady.

'Certainly! A man whom I can trust in every way is hand and glove with them. The unhappy wretches have a traitor in their midst. Young McLaughlin is bitten with the mania, a sad scatter-brain; and Bond, and Ford, who's half an idiot. The only one I'm sorry for is young Emmett, who should know better, being son of a State-physician. But then his brother, who dabbles in journalism, is a bad example. I should not be surprised if he were hanged some day.'

Poor Sara, who had gone to where Doreen was sitting, glanced from one at another, her pupils expanded by terror. She knew that the dear undergraduate had not taken the oath. But to be suspected at such times as were looming was a matter of grave jeopardy. Her father looked serious, and so did Terence. Both liked the Emmetts, and were sorry to hear about this traitor. My Lord Clare's flippant discourse was distasteful to all. Was he making himself disagreeable on purpose? Curran was shaking his hair ominously. Terence burst out in defence of the young men who were, he swore, as good as gold, and his personal friends—more worthy than others who should be nameless. My lady, in her orange robe, looked like a thunder-cloud. Cassidy, to pour oil on the troubled waters, proposed that Miss Wolfe should sing, and Arthur, relieved at the diversion, drew out his girl's harp into the room.

Doreen would have refused if she had dared, for these covert bickerings constantly renewed upon topics which moved her so strongly, were wearing to the nerves. But everybody suddenly desired music.

'Something Irish, set to one of your own melodies,' suggested Cassidy. 'Sure, Curran will play a second on his violoncello; and I'll give you a new song afterwards.'

Well, anything was better than the grating of Lord Clare's harsh voice. Listlessly sitting down to the harp, Doreen permitted her shapely arms to

wander over its strings. Then, fired by a kind of desperation, she lifted her proud head and began in a rich contralto, while Mr. Curran, on a low stool beside her, scraped out an impromptu bass :

“Brothers, arise ! The hour has come to strike a blow for Truth and God.

Why sit ye folded up and dumb ? why, bending, kiss a tyrant’s rod ?

For what is death to him who dies, the martyr’s crown upon his head ?

A charter—not a sacrifice—a life immortal for the dead. And life itself is only great when man devotes himself to be By virtue, thought, and deed the mate of God’s true children and the free !”

Her voice trembled and gave way, and bowing her neck over the instrument, the girl wept. Sara stole up and kissed away the tears. Her own heart was exceeding heavy, she knew not why, except that she saw visions of Robert in peril, such as she was thankful to think were only visions. If aught befell him, she would lie down and die—of that she was quite sure—foolish virgin ! She had bestowed her pure heart unasked. Would he who held it value the priceless gift ?

My lady and Lord Clare looked at Arthur Wolfe in consternation. Where did the naughty damsel learn such a song ? Of what dangerous stuff was she made to presume to chant it before the chancellor himself ? ‘It is the cloven foot,’ her aunt thought with fury. That terrible blot ! Anxieties were thickening. Something must be done, or the

girl would go to perdition even faster than she galloped across country.

Arthur looked wistfully at his sister, then at his child, who, the paroxysm past, was a cold statue again—haughty, unabashed. To look at her, you would feel assured that she had done right, while all the rest were wrong. Some people are incorrigible, and Miss Wolfe was evidently one of them. Her father suspected shrewdly that she had learnt the song at Curran's. He knew that she worshipped Tone, and that she had been in the habit of meeting him at the Priory. But he never had the courage to stand between the Catholic and the Protestant champion of her faith. As usual, he temporised, striving to serve two masters, and, as usual, suffered for his weakness.

Lord Clare read him like a book, and was disgusted with his friend. Wolfe's sensitive conscience was constantly racked by doubts which a natural diffidence magnified into bugbears. Clare's inflexibly ambitious mind despised the hysterics of the country which he governed; brazen and hard, he was a fit tool for Mr. Pitt. As he looked at Arthur, who hung his head over his daughter's escapade, he decided that this was a square peg in a round hole. As attorney-general, acts might be demanded of him by-and-by, from which he would shrink with lamentable want of character. What if he were to shillyshally when prompt action was urgent! He might upset the deftest schemes, overturn the most skilful combinations, by his bung-

ling. Only a few minutes ago, his tell-tale face had shown how he disapproved of the one witness project. What a pity it was that the inoffensive fellow had ever been promoted, for as a simple lawyer he would have been pushed by events into the background. Well, well! He must be tried, and trotted forth to test his mettle. If he were proved wanting, there would be nothing for it but to pass him on again—to shelve him somewhere in the Lords, where he might drone harmlessly.

But this outrageous bit of scorn—his daughter! My lady must have a hard time with her. She was going awry, as hysterical girls will; yet surely the dowager was more than capable of coping with this febrile phase of a strong nature half developed? Then the astute idea passed through the schemer's brain of how convenient it would be if the budding Joan of Arc could be used as an unconscious spy upon her party. An ingenious notion, but one difficult to carry out—a delicate game, which would have to be worked through the countess, who was a crotchety soured woman, with a nice sense of honour, who would slave night and day for a cause which she esteemed a rightful one, but who would rather cut off her hand than stoop to what she knew was a meanness—provided that it did not affect her interests.

My Lord Clare could not forbear smiling when, glancing round the party, he noted the effect of the song. My lady dumbly furious; Arthur apologetic; Doreen herself indifferent; Terence uneasy and

taken aback. One savage breast alone had music soothed ; and Terence, who revered his chief, thanked Cassidy with a nod for having withdrawn him from further contest. Once with his huge machine between his feet, he was invulnerable even to Erin's wrongs, scraping himself into a condition of ecstatic beatitude, from which there was no fretting him any more. There he sat, crouching like a black-beetle on a kitchen boiler, his underlip protruded, his face lighted with satisfaction, his head nodding to the time, and his frenzied eye fixed on the coat-of-arms upon the ceiling, as though to invoke its supporting monsters to turn and cock their ears. My Lord Clare's smile faded presently ; he hated music nearly as much as he hated Curran.

'Turn out the lights !' he cried. 'I wonder your ladyship has patience with the fellow's grimaces. And you, my lad,' he continued seriously, addressing Terence, 'accept the lesson of the times and avoid enthusiasm. In this country it leads to the halter. Steer your course wisely. Take a safer pilot to guide your inexperience than yonder hurdy-gurdyman, so that you may find yourself on the winning side at last. There is no doubt which that will be.'

'I will use my own judgment,' replied Terence, simply, with a dignity which would have won approval from his cousin, had she not just descended into the pleasaunce to recover, amid the influences of night, her natural calmness of demeanour.

'That beast's din addles my brains,' went on the

chancellor, rising to depart. 'Drive back with me, Arthur. I have a special subject to talk to you about. You must take a bolder course in politics. The ball is at your feet. We must teach you to find pluck enough to strike it.'

Wolfe smiled gently as he answered :

'I'll take a drive with pleasure, but you'll find me terribly deceitful ; for I must grub up money for my daughter's sake ; and yet, in certain ways, I'm an impracticable person—a mule with his feet together. Vacillating you think me. In some things you'll find I'm adamant.'

All were glad when at last the chancellor departed. Even my lady admitted that he could be crabbed at times. He was gone, but, like the gentleman in black, he left an evil savour in his wake.

Startled from reverie by the clang of the hall-door, Curran threw aside his bow and scratched his elf-locks pensively.

'No !' he said. 'These laws which they are continually framing are too dreadful. If the testimony of one witness is to be sufficient to convict us, then are we foredoomed ; for any one may be summoned to join in the Kilmainham minuet by the malice of a discharged groom, or the greed of the meanest cowboy. Trial and evidence are not children's baubles ; they were not even established for the sole purpose of punishing the guilty ; their most precious use is for the security of innocence.'

The little lawyer looked so horror-stricken, that both my lady and the giant burst out a-laughing.

‘Come,’ said the former, wresting the violoncello from his grasp, ‘your music carries you too far. Lord Clare was out of sorts, and played upon your fears. Thank heaven he is no Blunderbore, or he would not be my welcome guest. Now to bed. Sara looks worn out.’

‘He has no sense of right and wrong,’ grumbled Curran.

‘For shame! You are both good men. What a pity you can only agree in looking at each other through distorted glasses!’

‘Faix, her ladyship’s right,’ acquiesced Cassidy, with a grin. ‘You magnify the number of the informers. I should be sorry to believe there are half as many as you think.’

‘Did not Tone say you were simple?’ asked Curran, sadly. ‘So there’s some one watching the Emmetts? Can you guess? No! Nor I; but they must be warned. Clare is brewing some new devil’s haricot, and will dip Arthur’s ladle in it, if he may. What a net it is that they are winding about Erin! Pray God that we and ours may escape entanglement!’



CHAPTER VI.

MY LADY'S PROJECT.



GREEN stood by the crazy sun-dial, looking at the milky way, and reflecting upon the chatter which had assailed her ears. Consigned to Moiley! The dragon of the new *régime* was beginning to show that his hunger was insatiable. The prisons were filling apace. Lord Clare had hinted that worse was yet to come, that the shadow of the gibbet was to stretch across the earth, that hemp would soon be at a premium. But there were two Moileys—two goddesses of vengeance and retaliation, ready to strike, one for the oppressor, one for the oppressed. If their blood was roused, who might foretell what havoc they would make ere they sheathed their swords again!

The rustle of my lady's skirts recalled the maiden to herself, and she perceived her aunt descending into the garden. It was seldom that my lady changed

her routine in the smallest particular. What could be the cause of this sudden fancy for star-gazing ?

‘A lovely night,’ exclaimed her ladyship. ‘How sweet the roses smell ! I vow it is a sin to go to bed.’

‘Shane seems to think so,’ returned Doreen. ‘He never comes in till the small hours.’

My lady looked sharply in her niece’s face, but was nothing there save a settled sadness.

‘Come,’ she said, ‘Curran and his child are gone to rest. We’ll take a turn in the pleasaunce.’

They sauntered through the golden gate and down a leafy avenue, in silence, while owls and bats flitted past their heads and circled away among the foliage. My lady had something to say, and did not know how to say it. Doreen was thinking of the dear wanderer, who was tossing on the sea by this time. Presently my lady said abruptly :

‘Doreen, you must change your ways.’

The damsel’s nostrils dilated a little ; but, biting her lip, she answered nothing.

‘You are twenty-two,’ pursued her aunt. ‘It is time that you gave up playing Miss Hoyden, and settled down into a respectable married woman.’

The girl walked on without a word, wondering what was coming next, while her aunt, growing exasperated at what she was pleased to consider stubbornness, bent down to sniff a rose which wept gems upon her dress.

‘Does it trouble you,’ she said, wiping the dew from her skirts carefully with a handkerchief, ‘that

Shane should stop out so late? The Glandores were always rakes, but were none the worse for that. For my part I hate a milksop.'

Poor lady! The late lord had given her little experience of the milksop!

'What can it signify to me what he does?' asked Doreen, with a tinge of bitterness. 'He is drinking to King William now, no doubt, if not insensible beneath the table.'

This was awkward, for my lady desired to make the best of Shane, and the fact of his doing homage to the Immortal memory was not likely to be pleasing to a Roman Catholic. So she turned her batteries.

'You are wild, and will come to shipwreck,' she declared, 'if we do not set some one to look after you. The way you behaved just now was most deplorable. Your poor father looked wretched; but the dear soul is a goose. Unless you mend your ways you will find no one to marry you at all, which will be dreadful, and a disgrace to all of us. Your behaviour to Terence is not quite seemly, for you forget that he is grown up, and that you should not trifle with an inflammable youth.'

This shot went home. Thoroughly taken aback, Doreen cried:

'Terence! You must be jesting, aunt! He is my first cousin, almost my brother. You will accuse me of flirting with Shane next.'

'That is quite another matter,' replied my lady, coldly, for she was nettled at the contemptuous manner in which the girl spoke of her favourite son.

‘I say you must be married before you disgrace us all, which you certainly will do unless curbed, being half a plebeian born.’

The blood flooded the girl’s face, and she clasped her bosom with both hands to still the indignation rising there. For my lady, when annoyed beyond a given point, was apt to make sneering remarks about the late Mrs. Wolfe which filled her child with rage.

‘What do you mean?’ she exclaimed haughtily. ‘There is no *must* about the matter. You should have learned by this time that I will not be driven by any one on earth; certainly not by you.’ Then recovering herself, she went on more softly: ‘What a puzzle you are! Sometimes so kind, sometimes so cruel! I think you really care for me; you were so good to the motherless little one. If my mother had lived I might have been different. A Miss Hoyden, am I? I have never had any one in whom to put my trust, to whom I might tell my troubles; and a heart closed up, without sympathy, is a sore thing for one of my age!’

The girl’s voice died away, and her aunt felt uncomfortable.

‘To-day,’ Doreen resumed, ‘I went to see Ally Brady, who is dying, and nearly threw myself upon the neck of the lady who is nursing her. She looked so kind and hearty as her tears fell for the peasant-woman, and she clings to the prescribed creed as I do. It was Mrs. Gillin, of the Little House.’

My lady looked up sharply.

‘ You dared to speak to her ?’

‘ No ; I retired. But she looked after me with such a strange pity. Aunt, why do you object to my knowing this lady, though all the world speaks well of her ? Shane goes to the Little House, and Norah makes him welcome. He told me so. I have seen Norah often, and she is very pretty. What does it all mean ? Is Shane going to marry her ? May I speak to her when she’s Shane’s wife ? If he knows and likes the Gillins, why should not I, who, as a Catholic, have a sort of right to cherish them ?’

My lady started and stood still, as if she had seen an adder in her path, and said in an altered voice :

‘ Have I not commanded you never to mention that woman’s name before me ? Shane is more wild than I could wish. He does what he chooses ; and, besides, a man may do what a woman may not. If he were well married, he would grow quieter, no doubt. Your father’s wish is the same as mine. You know it, and are obstinate.’

Doreen was astonished, for Lady Glandore was not given to displays of emotion ; and now she was much agitated, while her features worked as if in physical pain. Kissing her niece on the forehead, she gathered up her skirts and walked rapidly back towards the house.

For an hour and more the girl wandered in the pleasaunce, taking no heed of dew, though her high-waisted dress was of the thinnest muslin. She was

weighing her aunt's hints, and the strange complications of her own position.

There could be no further doubt that my lady desired to unite her niece to Shane. Doreen had suspected it before, but the idea seemed too preposterous. What motive could be strong enough to bring about so amazing a desire on the part of the proud chatelaine, as a union between one of the hated faith, whose mother was of doubtful origin, and the dearly-loved head of the Glandores, who was young, rich, Protestant, good-looking? That she should ever come to permit a match even with the poor younger son, whom she did not love, would be surprising enough; but a motive might be found for that in his poverty and extravagance, and her trifling nest-egg. The blot on the escutcheon would not have mattered so much in his case, for he was unlikely ever to wear the coronet, and the attorney-general's scrapings would have gilded a more unpleasant bolus than his handsome daughter.

But Shane, who by reason of his wealth and position was a great catch, who might throw his handkerchief to whom he pleased! What could be the reason? Was it that his mother dreaded his being caught by some low and penniless adventuress—he who was so self-willed and given to low company? It could hardly be that; for in the eyes of the chatelaine, Doreen herself was little better, save in the way of money; and where the young earl was himself so wealthy, her little fortune could not be taken into consideration. If he would only go into

good society, Shane might aspire to the most brilliant match.

It was a riddle to which the damsel could find no solution, so she began calmly to consider how she should act herself. Should she yield to her aunt's wishes, and assume the high position of the young earl's bride? If she said 'Yes,' would Shane indeed take her to his bosom, or would he be disobedient in this as other things? If he came and asked her, would she say 'Yes,' or 'No?' She was amazed to find that she was by no means sure. He was an ignoble sot, a drunkard, and a debauchee; but, in the eyes of most young ladies, such qualities were rather admired than not. It was thought fine for a spark's eye to have a noble fierceness which softened to the mildness of the dove when contemplating 'the sex.' But then Doreen's education had been peculiar—different in many ways to that of other young ladies—partly on account of her motherlessness, partly because of the faith she professed. The Penal Code had eaten into her soul—she was more thoughtful and sober than girls of her age usually are; was given to day-dreams and impracticable heroic longings, tinged, all of them, by a romance due to her Irish nature and the romantic conditions of her time.

She had never thought much of marrying or giving in marriage, and it came upon her now as a new light, that by a marriage she might benefit the 'cause.' As she sauntered up and down, she reflected that, by espousing Shane, she might make of

herself a Judith for her people's sake. Shane was already sodden and sottish, given to excessive tippling. She, Doreen, was of a masculine strength of character, and knew it. Once established at the Abbey as its mistress, why should she not take on herself the control of the estates, as the present countess did, and manage them according to her liking? The United Irishmen were sadly in need of funds. Tone had said that a bloodless revolution was impossible. Arms and powder would be required when the struggle came. Why should not she provide a portion of it out of the wealth of the lord of Strogue? It seemed an ignoble thing to do; yet, for the cause's sake, was not anything justifiable? Did not Judith, the noblest of women, the purest of patriots, lower herself to the disguise of a harlot for the saving of her people? Doreen felt the holy flame burning within her, which goes to the making of Judiths.

Her father, though she loved him fondly, could never be of real service to her. What would he think of such a wedding? It mattered not, situated as she was. Her battle of life must be fought alone, without help from any one. She was fully aware of that, and was prepared to fight it—to the end—after her own fashion.

She was startled from her reverie by the banging of doors and shouts of discordant laughter. Cassidy had been singing some time since in the young men's wing, trolling out pathetic ballads for the edification of Terence and his chief—but these had

retired to rest long since. This must be the young lord and his boon companions—come to finish the night in wine and play as joyous gallants should. It would be awkward to meet them in their cups ; so she stole as noiselessly as might be through the golden gate, past the sun-dial among the flowers, and reached her chamber, which was over the chintz drawing-room (her own boudoir), just as there came a crash and awful din in the hall. Then followed a babel of angry voices. Lights appeared in the dining-hall opposite, the blinds of which were not drawn down, and a posse of young nobles—their clothes muddy and disarranged ; their hair dishevelled ; their action wild and excited—crowded in around their host. She could distinguish my lord by the glistening of his diamond coat-buttons as he was held back by four companions, from whose grasp he strove to free himself. One of them, whose brain was less heated than the rest, had removed his *couteau de chasse* from its sheath, and was expostulating with him ; but he was evidently not to be appeased without a scapegoat, for he kept pointing angrily at a broken bust of William III. which my lady had crowned with laurel that very day.

She could see that somebody had upset the bust, and that my lord wished to wipe out the insult to the Protestant champion with the blood of the offender. My lady did not appear. She had been well broken to orgies of the kind by the late lord, and took no heed of the uproar ; but the aged

butler, who, as a matter of course, had produced magnums of claret in tin frames upon the appearance of the party, seemed to be coaxing his young master into good temper, and with some success apparently, for by-and-by the *couteau de chasse* was given back and the party settled down amicably, having first tossed the offender out of window, who lay snoring upon the flower-beds till morning, wrapped in the sound sleep of drunkards.

Doreen sat at the open window, her chin buried in her hand, watching the proceedings of her cousin. His cravat was gone; his fair young chest exposed; his velvet surtout torn and stained; his striped silk stockings in tatters; the bunches of ribbon wrenched from off his half-boots. His face was blotched and bloated; his forehead disfigured by an ugly cicatrice which turned of a bright red when he was far gone in liquor or in passion. She saw him rise on his unsteady legs and wave a goblet at the fractured bust, while he clung with the other arm round the neck of the youth next to him. Then all the rest rose and bowed as well as they were able; some falling on the floor in the attempt and remaining there, while the others sat down to their drink again and clamoured for cards, shouting the while a chorus, which came muffled to her through the window-glass.

‘And it’s ho! ro! the sup of good drink—
And ho! ro! the heart would not think;
Ch, had I a shilling lapped up in a clout,
It’s a sup of good drink that would wheedle it out!’

Doreen sat staring till the chill of morning penetrated to her bones through the light robe of muslin. Then she crept stiff and weary into bed, while her teeth chattered and alternate douches of hot and cold water seemed pouring down her back. She had been studying Shane with a new interest, and trembled for her future peace, for, as she watched with senses sharpened, she was dismayed at the hideous preponderance of the animal in her cousin's nature. Never had she looked at him so earnestly before. It was like binding one's self to a hog for life. Sure Holofernes was not so degraded, or the fortitude of Judith would have given way. He was a warrior, mighty in battle, who, though an enemy, commanded respect. A glorious athlete such as 'tis woman's prerogative to outwit—as Delilah outwitted Samson, as Omphale conquered Hercules. Her ordeal too was of short duration. How differently severe would be the self-appointed task of this modern Judith, who contemplated tying herself deliberately for the whole of her life to a man who disgusted her in spite of his good looks; who, when shorn of the vulgar halo of animal courage, was no better than a brawler and a bravo. She might not strive to reform him, for with his reformation he would of course take the reins of his affairs, and the power of his wife would end, for which alone she married him. It would be her duty rather to encourage him in evil ways, and coax him down the ladder. Was she capable, she kept asking herself, as shuddering she drew the

sheets around her, of so tremendous a sacrifice as this? Tone's, sublime as she considered it, was nothing to what hers would be. He had thrown away earthly pelf, was a fugitive and an outlaw; but he retained his self-respect. Could she retain hers if Shane became her husband? No. Doreen confessed to herself that the position would be impossible. If it had been Terence, now! He was foolish and gay and distressingly healthy; under no pressure whatever could he bud into a hero. He was humdrum, and her native romance revolted from the humdrum. A fine grown man with a good temper and a prosaic appetite. Why, if he were to occupy Shane's shoes, all Dublin would be envying her luck and remarking how brazenly she had set her cap at him. Horror of horrors! How terribly commonplace! Then the girl upbraided herself for such foolish thoughts. Terence would never become Lord Glandore, and as a simple fisherman and sportsman could never win his cousin. Perhaps my lady was right in warning her to remember that he was grown up. He was a dear good boy, but wofully prosaic. But what had such as she to do with unmaidenly meditations anent marrying and giving in marriage? Sackcloth and ashes were the portion of the Catholics, who were treated as the Jews had been by the Crusaders. The sooner they died out the better. What a wonderful idea that was of Aunt Glandore's! If she were seriously bent on anything, she was not easy to baffle. Would it be best to speak out at

once and brave a certain storm, or to let things be, hoping to be delivered by some unexpected means? While she was debating this knotty question, her thoughts became gradually confused, and she sank into troubled slumber.



CHAPTER VII.

TRINITY.



R. CURRAN took the bait tendered to him by the chancellor. He made inquiries, sorted the fragments of his puzzle after his own fashion, and, filled with suspicions, became anxious to unveil without delay the fresh dangers which menaced his friends. And dangers so easy to unveil! The fowler cared not, it seemed, to mask his engines of destruction. Mr. Curran, from his place in the senate, publicly warned ministers of the iniquity of their proceedings, but nobody troubled to listen. The friends of government gaped, vowing that the orator was a maniac, that he had the secret society on the brain, and ought to be carted to the madhouse; the few who were on the other side laughed, declaring that Mr. Curran was misinformed. What could he do then but sigh and hold his peace? At least he would speak to the Emmetts and adjure them to be cautious, for the sake of all concerned.

When Tone's society for the promotion of universal concord was driven by artful goading to become a secret one, the conspirators met to discuss their grievances in a cellar in Backlane, near the corn-market; but when the time came for extinguishing Tone and others, SIRR, the captain of Lord Clare's sbirri, swept them thence, and they were forced to find another trysting-place. Pending final decision on this point, it was arranged as a miracle of cleverness that the younger Emmett should suddenly become hospitable. Trinity was always celebrated for its rollicking wine-parties. What more natural than that young Robert should do as others did; that he, hitherto so studious, should be led astray a little by the contagious force of bad example? A good cellaret of claret was provided at the common expense; songs were sung with open windows, at all hours of the day and night, of a convivial and bacchanalian character. There was no end to the shifts to which the patriots resorted, under the belief that they were hoodwinking Major SIRR. There arose a mania for ball-playing. Clerks, shopkeepers, attorneys, would meet of an afternoon at a hall taken for the purpose, and emerge thence in an hour or two singularly cool and fresh for men who had been practising athletics. There was also a rage for fencing—a plausible excuse enough for meeting in numbers, considering that the fire-eaters of the south had just revised the laws of the duello. The youthful aristocracy, in accordance with one of the new rules, had already formed themselves into

a club, called the Knights of Tara, whose members met three times a week in the theatre at Capel Street to display their prowess with the rapier before an audience of Dublin belles. What then should there be suspicious if the middle class followed their example?

The case was not quite the same, though; for while the Knights of Tara courted observation and loved to be seen lounging in cambric shirts and brodered slippers, with their hair in curl-papers, the members of the other fencing club kept rigorously closed doors, through which no one ever heard the familiar cry, sharp as a pistol-crack, of 'Ha! a hit!'

One evening, shortly after Tone's departure, there was a full gathering in the chambers on the second floor which looked on the grand quadrangle. It was necessary to instal with solemn rites a new chief in place of the wanderer, and to fix on a distinct plan of operations for enlarging the limits of the society. Tone had left his mantle to Thomas Addis Emmett as the oldest and wisest of the band—he was thirty-five—and so, in obedience to his last wishes, the editor of the *Press* was duly elected to the dangerous pre-eminence. Submitting to his brother's entreaties, he commenced his reign by administering the oath to young Robert, the dreamy lad of seventeen, which was done with awful ceremonies, as became the doings of conspirators. Blinds were drawn for a few minutes that no prying gaze might penetrate the Holy of Holies; then all sat down,

with the neophyte standing in their midst, while their president read through the constitution. Then the oath was administered upon the Scriptures, which, together with the constitution, were clasped on the bared breast, and after that a lock of hair was cut away under the queue behind, and a formula learnt by heart, by means of which one member could recognise another. It was touching to look on these brothers standing side by side, the elder receiving the younger into a fraternity, each unit of which, before many months were out, might possibly be called upon to meet an ignominious death. Thomas was big and burly, with a sedate cast of countenance which betokened thought, whilst Robert was slight of build, and looked almost like a girl, as with eyes fixed on space he repeated the strange sentences, his face aglow with enthusiasm, his body trembling like a leaf.

‘Are you straight?’

‘I am.’

‘How straight?’

‘As straight as a rush.’

‘Go on then?’

‘In truth and trust; in unity and liberty.’

‘What have you in your hand?’

‘A green bough.’

‘Where did it grow?’

‘In America.’

‘Where did it bud?’

‘In France.’

‘Where will you plant it?’

‘In the Crown of Great Britain.’

‘God be with you then, and with us all,’ Thomas concluded ; ‘and now a glass all round to the health of the new member.’

The pledge was gravely accepted, each one raising his beaker and saying : ‘To the diffusion of light !’ ere he drained its contents and replaced it on the table bottom upwards.

‘Now, gentlemen,’ pursued Thomas. ‘We have serious business before us. Theobald will be away a year at least before help can come, and it is his wish that we should without delay prepare to graft the military upon our civil functions. With arms and ammunition Tone will provide us if he can, but they will be of little service unless we know how to use them. In the halcyon days of the Volunteers every Irishman was a soldier. Let us show that the martial spirit of our ancient kings, which then for awhile revived, is not quite dead in us.’

‘I will never consent to bloodshed,’ shuddered young Robert. ‘Internecine strife is too horrible !’

‘You have been sworn in by your own desire,’ returned his brother, sternly, ‘and your first duty is blind obedience. It is Tone’s conviction that we must fight, and fight we will when the time comes—to the death ! In revolutions there is nothing certain but blood. The march of the captives is through a Red Sea. After forty years of seeking new abodes, which of those who lead them shall touch the Promised Land ? Lord Clare shows us his cards, and a pretty hand it is. Sirr is organising

his paid spies into a battalion who are to dwell at the Castle like pampered pets. It is hard to believe that Irishmen will be so base. 'These informers are to lie *perdu* until wanted—are to worm themselves into the confidence of suspected persons, to eat of their bread and salt, to nurse their little ones upon their knees, and then, upon a signal, to give them over to the hangman.'

'But the Viceroy!' cried Cassidy in indignation. 'Lord Camden is a man of honour who would never consent to such a plan!'

Thomas Emmett shook his head mournfully.

'We all know,' he said, 'that the cabinet rules the Viceroy, and that Lord Clare is master of the cabinet.'

'Seeing's believing,' retorted the giant doggedly, as he stretched out his great hand for the claret bottle. 'Of course we must watch that no such villain shall creep among us. I won't believe that the English are without mercy.'

'At the battle of Aughrim,' replied Thomas, 'the blood sank into the soil of seven thousand Irishmen who were only defending their rights.'

'As for drilling and such like,' said Cassidy, 'I'm with you, and the sooner we start the business the better. I've learnt a new song that we'll sing as we march to battle——'

'Oh, you simpleton!' laughed Terence Crosbie, who, slightly touched with wine, had followed the proceedings of the two Emmetts with amusement. 'Romancing as usual—giving credence to every

scandalous tale you hear. Even if there were truth in them, your grievances would not give birth to generals. You will never make colonels out of linendrapers.'

'No more than purses out of sows' ears,' returned Cassidy, with a merry twinkle. 'No, councillor, that we never will. But we'll wheedle a few aristocrats like your honour, whose blue blood shall mingle with our muddy stuff. When the day dawns, you and a few like yourself shall lead the boys to victory.'

Terence looked annoyed, but said nothing; while Cassidy and the others scanned his face narrowly. He was not affiliated to the society, nor had the remotest ambition of becoming so; for he knew that it behoved not one of his order to join in such movements as this. Yet there was a fascination for him in its doings, which kept him dangling upon its outskirts. Some of his most valued friends were enrolled on the list of United Irishmen, and he knew well how Doreen was praying for their success. So he attended the supper-parties sometimes in his purposeless way, and they permitted him to do so freely, despite the maxim that in troublous times half-friends are no friends. They knew, or thought they knew, that he was the soul of honour, who would never betray a confidence; and hoped, encouraged by Cassidy, that some day he might be cajoled or stung into their ranks, which would be a feather in their cap indeed; for to be led by a Crosbie of Ennishowen would give them

a prestige at once such as in these democratic days we can hardly realise. And Terence, seeing through the simple scheme (for he was sharp enough, though lazy), was flattered by their confidence. Yet for all that he promised himself to hold aloof from active co-operation with hot-pated friends who made mountains out of mole-hills. He had no intention of heading the forlorn hope of a misguided rabblement who would fly helter-skelter before the first puff of cannon smoke. So he prudently refrained from picking up the gauntlet, and listened to the giant, who was delivered of an idea.

‘I’ve a notion!’ cried Cassidy, thumping the table till the glasses rang again.

‘Be cool now!’ cautioned Tom Emmett. ‘You are as dangerous as a powder-magazine.’

‘Is it dangerous I am?’ grumbled the other. ‘Sure something must be risked, or we’ll niver get along. I’ve an idaya, gintlemen, which I’m willing to see to at my own expense, though a poor man. I’ve reason to know that the militia may be tampered with. Their hearts are with the cause, and they’re as poor as rats or your humble servant. Money and drink will do much, and women will settle the matter. Here’s a letter from Belfast which says that two hundred and fifty of the men in camp there have secretly declared for us, and that it only needs the personal presence of a delegate to bring over half the rest. When the French land they’ll rise and kill their officers. Think of the fine fright that’ll give the royalists! Sure and

isn't that the way to out-plot England? Shall I go to Belfast and reconnoitre? Of coorse ye must give me credentials. A little note, signed, will do the trick, and show I'm honest. As for the town-major of whom ye're all so frightened, his bark's worse nor his bite. The Irish Jonathan Wild can be bribed. I'll answer for him; but there's time galore for that. Dangerous, am I? I'm the only one, I think, with a drain of sperit. There's a great speech. Phew, I'm dhry! Hand round the clart, boys, and we'll have a stave.'

The simple giant's harangue was favourably received, the paper was penned and signed, and he was wetting his whistle for a song when Tom Emmett raised his hand.

'Hark! who comes?'

There was a footstep on the creaking stair; then a knock; and a familiar voice said: 'It is I. Curran.'

'Nurse Curran!' sneered Cassidy, annoyed. 'Come to look after his foster-babby.'

The little advocate entered, and leaned against the door with his arms folded.

'Terence, my lad,' he said. 'You must come away with me. What would my lady say, if you came to be arrested?'

'Arrested!' echoed a dozen voices. 'Within Trinity? Impossible!'

'I fail to see that it's impossible,' snarled Curran. 'Hide those foolish papers there, or burn them—children, too easily beguiled with toys! And you, Terence, come away with me at once. Why?'

Are not convenient edicts being passed each day to simplify the work of government? Laws for the suppression of gaming, profane swearing, atheistical assemblies, which places every man's home under surveillance of the town-major?

'You have explicit information?' inquired Tom Emmett, anxiously.

'I don't say that!' stammered Curran, somewhat confused. 'I only say that your threshold might be invaded at any moment, and that ye've yourselves to thank if ye get into a hopeless scrape. A few hours since, a carpenter who is under obligation to me was at work in Ely Place. While repairing the floor between two double doors he distinctly heard Lord Clare in conversation with the town-major, in which Sirr told his chief that there would be a strong muster to-night in this boy's chambers. Am I making too free in asking you to lock away those documents, or would ye prefer hanging at once to save trouble? The carpenter wrenched off a hinge and begged to be allowed to fetch a new one; but instead of going straight to the iron-monger's he ran to me with commendable speed, gave the office, and returned to his work. What it all means I am not in a position to say; but mark my words, you have a traitor in your midst, who reports to the enemy every word you utter. Your necks are your own, to do with as you like; but I'm responsible for you, Terence, to your mother, and I summon you to go away with me.'

Tom Emmett flushed scarlet, and involuntarily

placed a hand upon the pistol in his breast. A low murmur went round the room as Cassidy sprang to his feet.

‘Take care!’ he shouted, ‘how ye bring vague charges. Many a disfigured corpse has Moiley eaten—many an informer has floated out to sea. Give a name—only a name—and I’ll scrunch the spalpeen so flat that ye’ll not know him from a sheet of paper, save for the coat on him!’

Curran shrugged his shoulders.

‘Do you think if I knew the scoundrel I’d not have pointed at him long ago? It’s for you to find him out. Don’t glare at me, man—I’m not a youngster who has never blazed. Mind, I’ve warned you to be circumspect. The Irish nature is too open. It can’t keep a secret without telling a lie, and lies lead to awful tangles. It’s no affair of mine. Terence, come along.’

The junior rose and stretched himself, and prepared to follow his chief.

A betrayer in their midst! The case did seem hopeless to the young councillor; so hopeless as to be almost contemptible. Possibly Lord Clare was a trifle over-strict with them, but he certainly appeared justified to a certain extent in assuming with the children the manner of a severe pedagogue. What a pity that they persisted in fathering every enormity upon him!

‘It’s a bad job, my friends,’ he said. ‘Curran’s right about the papers. Good-night.’

As they crossed the quadrangle his mentor be-

came wondrous voluble. He was garrulous as to my lady, and her unfortunate penchant for the chancellor; talked of Glandore, and all the titled in the land, till his companion eyed him in indolent surprise. To occupy his attention was the design of his mentor, for lurking in the shadow of doorways were certain darkling figures who were not gowns-men; and the little king's counsel feared lest Terence, if he perceived danger to be imminent, should be ill-judged enough to retrace his steps and get mixed up in the misfortunes of his friends.

The spectres allowed the pair to pass, and then, gliding to the door from which they had issued, left half their number there, whilst the rest stole through the gateway to the inner court—so as to command two special windows which were pointed out to them.

Meanwhile the party above, having completed the business of the evening, prepared itself to be jolly. The story of the proposed arrest, the vague charge about an informer, were evidently Bugaboos invented by nurse Curran for the luring away of his junior.

Cassidy, who was in great spirits to-night, and had drank deeply, demonstrated with the utmost clearness that the fabrication was absurd. By an old law of Queen Elizabeth (the only pleasant law she ever made for Ireland), no bumbailiff or importunate creditor might set his foot within the College-gates. Alma Mater was a sanctuary from which none might be taken an any account without an order from the

authorities of Trinity, who were too jealous of their rights ever to grant such order. Moreover, the watch (harmless old women !) were always friends with the gownsmen—ready to lend a staff or lantern, or feign sleep or assume deafness, just as the frolicsome young gentlemen should decree. It was quite unlikely that they would witness any threatening demonstration without instantly giving an alarm, and even Sirr would think twice before daring an assault upon the inmates of Trinity without the assistance of the junior dean. Not that the undergraduates were as bold a body now as when they slew my Lord Glandore, or so unanimous either, as none knew better than Lord Clare. Yet they were no cowards, and always ready for a ‘blaze.’

The younger Emmett, alarmed at first by Curran’s dismal prophecies, was convinced by Cassidy’s gibes that his terrors were ill-placed, and set about producing from mysterious lurking-places the elements of a good supper—ham, chickens, bread—furtively glancing in the mirror now and then at the tiny tonsure which marked him for a patriot. The giant arranged knives and forks, and filled the round-bottomed claret decanters, trimming the table with a tasty eye as a patriotic table should be laid. In the centre he placed the constitution—bulwark of the society—throned on a loaf of bread. Close to it the president’s badge, whilom Tone’s—Tom Emmett’s bauble now which consisted of a sham-rock in green silk bearing a harp without a crown. Near this the copy of the Scriptures; and by his

own place a list of toasts such as should help to pass the time till chapel-hour. When all was ready he called on his companions to fall to ; and discussed with the president, while the viands disappeared, the details of his journey to Belfast.

As they talked the claret waned, and the views of the company grew rosier. Thomas agreed that it would be a wise system to spread disaffection among the soldiery. The patriotism of the militia might surely be counted on, he thought. With the yeomanry it might be otherwise, as it was officered by the upper class. Deliberation and prudence must be the watchwords of the giant at Belfast, for months must pass before Tone could hope to accomplish anything ; and all were of one mind as to the necessity of French assistance. At the earliest, no French fleet could be expected till the summer of '96, therefore it behoved the leaders of the cause to keep the broth gently simmering till the moment of the crisis—organising battalions, drilling companies during the night, establishing a vast military sys'tem which should enable the four provinces to effect a simultaneous rising. That was the important point, spontaneity of movement ; and he, Emmett, would make it his business to see that the unity of action should be complete.

The danger was (he impressed on Cassidy) lest the wickedness of England should exasperate the people too soon. A given degree of cruelty will drive the wisest mad. Patience is among the greatest of virtues. Here was another thing, which it was

all-important to consider. Terence Crosbie had put his finger on one of their weakest points—their lack of military genius. The best army in Christendom is powerless without a general. What a pity that Tone should be gone away, for the germ was visible in him which would have blossomed forth into glorious fruition under the sun of opportunity!

‘Now!’ Cassidy cried, after a while, remarking that some of the delegates were beginning to snore, ‘fill your glasses, and I’ll sing ye the new song which shall sound the knell of the Sassanagh. ’Tis written by Barry, a mere gossoon, who’s in Kilmainham at this minute. Bad cess to the ruffians as put him there!’ Then, draining off a bumper, he loosened the voluminous folds of his cravat, and commenced in his mellow voice, while those who were sober enough yelled the refrain:

“What rights the brave? The sword!

What frees the slave? The sword!

What cleaves in twain the despot’s chain, and makes his gyves and dungeons vain? The sword!

Then cease the proud task never! while rests a link to sever.
Guard of the free, we’ll cherish thee, and keep thee bright
for ever!”

So loudly was ‘The Sword’ trolled forth, that more peaceful neighbours, worn out with study, turned uneasily in bed, cursing the rackety crew ere they slept again; so loudly was the final chorus shrieked, that none heard the tramp of footsteps on the stairs, none heeded the groping of unaccus-

tomed fingers upon the handle, till the door was flung open, displaying a body of men upon the landing whose crossbelts showed white through a disguise. The young men stared bewildered as on some horrid vision, and strove to get up on their feet. Thomas, more sober than the rest, laid his hand upon his pistol, but withdrew it again, seeing how numerous were those who stood without.

‘What do you want?’ he asked.

A short man stepped from behind the rest. He was remarkable for a hooked beak, eyes too close together, shaded by heavy brows which met in a tuft over his nose. He wore a tight stock with a large silver buckle, hair plainly clubbed, and a silver whistle like a boatswain’s attached to a buttonhole by a thong.

‘I am Major Sirr,’ he snapped, ‘and arrest all present in the King’s name. Seize those documents!’

Cassidy took a paper from his flapped pocket and tried to swallow it, but the major’s men, marking his clumsy movement, pressed his bull-throat till he gave it forth again. How arbitrary is the effect of drink! Some men it renders furious, endowing them with double strength; others it makes dull and stupid, robbing them of the power that they had. Cassidy’s giant bulk and tremendous muscles should have stood him in good stead now or never; but he certainly had imbibed a portentous quantity of claret, and the shaking he was getting seemed quite to muddle him.

‘Ah now, major dear,’ he whimpered, smiling a sickly smile, ‘you’d not take it from me and shame a poor colleen? Don’t look at her name now! Bad luck to ye! Don’t, now!’

‘’Tis an order signed by the committee of the United Irishmen—no lady’s billet,’ Major Sirr replied coldly, holding the paper to the candle. ‘My friend, I regret to see you in this plight—but I must do my duty.’

Robert, on the first entrance of Sirr’s lambs—for such he knew them at once to be, though robed in long gowns—made a rush to the window of the inner room in order to alarm the college, but speedily drew in his head again, for a row of muskets was pointed at him which glinted, pallid, in the light of early dawn.

‘Trapped!’ he exclaimed, wringing his hands in despair. ‘No, not yet!’ Then, perceiving that Sirr and his band, expecting no resistance, were busily engaged gleaning together badge, constitution, and list of treasonable toasts, he stole to the discomfited giant—a hero but a moment since—and whispered rapidly, ‘Come! A dash at the door, and we can get downstairs. I’ll lead you to the campanile. One ring at the bell, and the college will awake!’

Cassidy shook himself and appeared to understand. Flinging aside the two men who loosely held him, he butted forward, upsetting table and lights, and in the confusion and darkness all who barred the passage. Swiftly he rolled, rather than

ran, down the steep staircase, closely followed by Robert, and sent sprawling in the doorway a fat old person, who yelped piteously for mercy.

‘The junior dean!’ ejaculated Robert. ‘The dastard! Himself to betray our ancient rights! But come—we’ll attend to him later—to the campanile, to rouse the college!’

Sirr’s lambs, recovering from their surprise, pursued the fugitives; but a little time was gained by their all tumbling in a heap over the unhappy dean, before he had time to scramble out of the way.

‘O Lord! O Lord! I’m kilt! Follow them!’ he panted; ‘the campanile’s at the corner of the inner yard. If they ring the bell for a rescue, I’m a dead man, for they’ll surely murder me! Oh that I had never mixed in this hellish business!’

His lamentations died away in a groan, for Sirr held a pistol to his head, calling the skies to witness that he would shoot him unless he instantly led the way. Never since he was a child did the pursy old gentleman run as fast as he did now. Terror gave wings to his gouty feet, and the invading party reached the campanile to see Cassidy’s burly shoulder force in the door, and Robert Emmett precipitate himself within. It was a race who should first reach the platform.

‘Is it the dean that’s rooned us?’ Cassidy had been exclaiming. ‘By Jabers, then, I’ll wring his neck for him before he’s much older! Run, jewel, for you know the place, which I don’t, while I attend to him. Here’s a string that’ll do the job.’

And in a trice he had cut the rope which swung before him as high up as his long arms reached, and was fastening at one end a noose.

‘What are you doing?’ cried Robert, in dismay, ‘the ringing-rope of the great bell!’

‘Oh, tear and ’ounds! is it?’ murmured the giant, with a blank look, as he dropped it. ‘Sure, I tuk it to hang the dean with!’

It was a fatal piece of stupidity, but the mischief was irretrievable. The rope-end dangled just out of Robert’s reach. The men who had been watching in the inner yard closed in, and levelling their muskets, summoned them to surrender quietly. By the time Sirr’s party came up with the panting dean the giant was pinioned with the unlucky rope, while Robert was in the grip of two sturdy soldiers.

So much rowdiness was habitually perpetrated within Trinity—such a succession of practical jokes and madcap tricks—that none were likely to heed the hubbub of this chase. Thomas, who had so sagely recommended prudence half an hour since, stood in bitter reverie among his fellow-prisoners, reproaching himself mournfully for his blindness; wondering in self-abasement whether it was not better after all that one who had at starting shown himself so bad a chief, should be thus summarily deposed from office. For he saw at once that his fate would be the same as that of those already sacrificed—either exile beyond seas, or dreary rotting in Newgate or Kilmainham—for was not his signature

appended, in the capacity of newly-elected president, to the paper which loyal Cassidy had tried to swallow? And what a covey had been captured beside himself! what gaps there would be now in the already thinned ranks of those who were prepared to win or perish! Curran's words had come true with regard to the capture—was his other assertion equally correct? Was there a Judas in their midst who was handing them over to the avenger, the while he gave the kiss of fellowship? The thought was too horrible. Whom was he to suspect? Not Cassidy, or Bond, or McLaughlin, or his fervent brother Robert—or Curran himself. None of these—who then? It must be Terence Crosbie, whom they had weakly admitted behind the veil, trusting to his honour as a gentleman. His honour! One of the semi-English aristocrats, whose brother was a Blaster—whose mother was Clare's dearest friend. Scales seemed to fall from his eyes, and he stood staring at his own folly. It was evident that Terence had coquetted with them merely to study their plans. That frank air of *bonhomie* was assumed. He was like his brother Glandore—only more crafty and astute instead of imbecile; that was all. He was deceiving Curran now as he had deceived them, and Curran was watching over him with the solicitude of a father. It was all too horrible—the world a place of blackest infamy—Ireland the darkest spot upon its face. Yet no. His better judgment revolted against such a belief. The fresh air was balmy; the yellowing sky of sur-

passing loveliness. Man, if made of stuff so innately vile, would never have been placed in so fair a casket. Facts are stubborn things, though. The meeting had been betrayed by somebody. Who was the wretch?

It was by this time quite light, and the town-major deemed it wise to remove his prey before early-rising undergraduates should be stirring. He gave his orders therefore—softly, but with martinet decision—and the party marched away, leaving Robert sitting on the platform.

‘I am ready,’ he said, leaping up. ‘I am one with them, and will go quietly;’ but Major Sirr held up his hand and grinned.

‘You are fine devil’s spawn, no doubt,’ he said, while his nose wrinkled, ‘but we don’t want you just yet. You’re but a baby blustering like a man. Look at his smooth chin—or is it a girl? Newgate’s a brave residence for summer, if your purse is well lined; if not, best hang yourself before going thither. No, no! I’ve no warrant to arrest your ladyship—but your time will come, I doubt not.’

‘Let him be!’ cried his brother Thomas. ‘Whither do you take us?’

‘First to Kilmainham with you,’ Sirr replied sharply. ‘Then with the rest to Newgate; then to your offices to seize your precious newspaper, demolish your press, and scatter your type. Have you any objection?’

‘That is illegal,’ Thomas affirmed, ‘till the paper is condemned for sedition.’

The town-major gave vent to a grumbling cachinnation like the rattling of a skeleton in a cupboard, but no smile lit up his sinister countenance. Then he echoed :

‘Illegal, ha, ha ! That can be set right. Forward—march !’

The cortége moved across the quadrangle, and the massive gates of Alma Mater closed behind it. Robert Emmett sat dazed, while the yellow in the sky above the roofs changed to pink and then to blue ; for they were gone—away from the sanctuary into the wicked world without ; no hue and cry could save them now. The junior dean, his nerves calmed by whisky-punch, lay cosily between the blankets, dreaming of the bishopric he had won that night. An early gownsman, flinging wide his shutters before settling to his morning’s work, smiled down on the wild rake who must have come in too drunk to find his way to bed. Boys will be boys, though their mammas wish that they would act as sages ; and they must season their heads while they are young.

But the studious undergraduate was wrong in his surmise. Excitable by temperament, delicate in body, and overwrought in mind, Robert Emmett had swooned away.



CHAPTER VIII.

CAIN AND ABEL.



EXT morning Mr. Curran rode early to the Abbey, with news of the arrests which he had been powerless to prevent. He looked with an eye less jaundiced than usual upon the world, for the sea-breeze instilled fresh life into him, weary and jaded as he was from many causes, and he felt that he deserved well of her ladyship for saving her son from a scandal. Though he laughed and joked in company, in private he was nearly always sad, partly by constitution, partly by reason of the sights he saw around him; and as he rode along this morning and meditated concerning his foe Lord Clare, the flecks of sunlight that chequered his mind vanished, leaving only darkness and despondency behind. Oh, that chancellor! Would no one free Ireland from a tutelage which became hourly more oppressive and capricious? Why could not the innocent conspirators

be left alone? Theobald, the whale, was gone. Sure, naught but stirring up of dirty water could be gained by harrying the minnows. It was unwise to have locked up the lads with such a rattling of locks and muskets. The raid upon Tom Emmett's office, too, was a deplorable proceeding. No new or special charge of iniquity had been brought against his paper. Yet the place was ransacked in his absence, his property destroyed, his chairs and tables tossed out of window as though they carried treason in their varnish. Lord Clare must be mad, or desperately wicked. If he brought the country to ruin, it should not be for want of warning. To protest in parliament is one thing, to argue and implore in private is another. The little lawyer decided to speak openly to Lord Clare at their very next meeting, and clinched the matter in his mind with such a thump of his hunting-crop as caused his pony to leap forward and nearly throw his master from the saddle.

Madam Gillin and her daughter Norah were gardening as he rode past their hedge, and the former hallooed to him to stop. Mr. Curran could scarce forbear laughing at her appearance, so grotesquely serious did she look in a frayed turban soiled with pomade, and a crumpled frock of extravagant fashion, from under which peeped a pair of satin slippers down at heel. It was a thrifty habit with Madam Gillin to wear out her old quality-clothes at home, for she said that Norah must have a fine dowry somehow, and that for that

purpose it would be needful to economise. Now her garments and her child's were always of the flimsiest and most tawdry mode, profusely adorned with feathers and spangles, trimmed with outrageous frills and furbelows; and the twain, who did not trouble soap and water unless about to receive company, might be seen any day over the hedge which divided their property from the main-road, strutting up and down among the flower-beds like moulting peacocks or birds of paradise in a decline. Madam Gillin was lying nervously in wait for news this morning, and hailed Curran's appearance with relief, for her nurse, Jug Coyle, had heard of the arrests from frequenters of her shebeen, and vague rumours were afloat that Terence was among the captured. Oddly enough, although she had appointed herself guardian in ambush to the younger son, she had never spoken to him: yet was she well posted in all that concerned her *protégé* down to minutest details; for were not all the array of grooms, farriers, dog-boys, foot-boys, tay-boys—what not?—in the habit of frequenting that too-convenient boozing-ken whose insidious hospitality was so offensive to their mistress at the Abbey? This was Madam Gillin's real reason for having established Jug at the Irish Slave. Through her she commanded an army of spies who, for a drop of the crather, studied my lady's face, translated her thoughts, imagined motives, as servants will who are argus-eyed, imaginative, inquisitive, endowed with a hundred ears. She was true to her trust of

watching over Terence, though she seemed to know nothing at all about him, resolved, if need were, to do battle on his behalf, to point the finger of public opinion at my lady if she behaved badly ; and now she was sore perplexed concerning him, albeit he wist not of a guardian angel in a dirty old turban and crushed ostrich feathers.

Mr. Curran set her mind at rest, and turned up the avenue which led to the Abbey. The youth had certainly been present at the meeting, because the Emmetts were among his closest friends ; but he was not affiliated, he assured her ; and both agreed that his imagination must not be permitted to take fire ; that he must never be allowed to become a member of the society.

When his nag turned the corner of the shrubbery, the little lawyer found those he sought grouped in front of the hall-door. My lady, in grey brocade, with a twist of lace through her white hair, was standing erect with crossed arms, looking with satisfaction at Doreen and Shane. The girl, though self-willed, had evidently taken her hint, and was preparing to lay siege to Shane ; at least his fond mother chose to think so, and was deceived, as mothers often are. Just as grave people, for an idle whim, will turn for a moment from lofty contemplations to consider a pebble by the wayside, so calm Doreen had been bitten by a conceit. In her self-examination she had become convinced, with sorrow, that the part of Judith was beyond her strength, if Shane was to play Holofernes ; and, disgusted with

her own weakness, had permitted her mind to settle on my lady's nickname of Miss Hoyden. Being proved incapable of supreme sacrifice, she felt a wrathful desire for self-abasement, and resolved that, if she could not please her aunt in great things, she would do so at least in little ones, at the expense of private tastes.

So, to Lady Glandore's surprise, she appeared on this very morning in fashionable attire, which a week ago she had haughtily declined to wear; a sumptuous high-waisted percale, brodered in forget-me-nots, with great puffed sleeves and tight short skirt; low shoes of blue satin with wide strings; her beautiful hair in a straight sheet down her back, plaited together with straw, as the prevailing fashion was. Perched on the top of her head was a dainty straw bonnet, fit only for a fairy, and she looked under it, with her thoughtful brown face and solemn eyes, like some lovely victim tricked out in incongruous frippery, who was destined to figure in some Hibernian *auto-da-fé*.

'Young ladies of a strong-minded and serious turn do evidently not array themselves in wonderful garments without a reason,' so my lady argued. 'Neither do they descend to coquetry, save for the snaring of young men. Whom could Miss Wolfe desire to snare, if not her cousin Shane?'

This was well—extremely well. Unhappily, the young lord was not struck with the bonnet, or with the forget-me-nots. His mother saw that she would have to guide his attention to his cousin's blandishments.

Alack ! he was in no mood to play the lover, being prosaically engrossed with a throbbing brow and swollen tongue. Shane, although he had 'made his head,' and could drink claret against most people, was apt to feel faded of a morning, and to retaliate for physical ills upon the first person who came within his reach. Last night he had presided over the Blasters, had shattered a decanter on the pate of a gentleman who presumed to breathe hard in his presence, and who, of course, had challenged him to fight. So far so good ; but the stranger had shown himself so ill-bred as absolutely to decline to draw his sword till certain business matters could be arranged, and so the meeting was perforce postponed for a few hours—a most rude and inconsiderate proceeding ! For might not the champion Blaster, the admirable Hellfire, the Prince of Cherokees, have other work upon his hands before dinner-time ? And besides, though money-debts may wait for months without a smirching of the niceties of honour, it is a bad example for the multitude to allow duels to accumulate. Moreover, Shane had promised, as it happened, to promenade with the Gillins, in the Beaux Walk, on this particular afternoon. Even an Irish earl cannot, like Roche's bird, be in two places at a time ; and so the youthful fire-eater fretted and fumed, cross with himself and everybody else, heedless of his cousin's bonnet, and longed to force a quarrel upon some one.

Terence was seated a few yards off, on the steps of the young men's wing, which led to his own

apartment, giving some directions to his private henchman with regard to the manufacture of flies. Now and then he threw a displeased glance at his pretty cousin, marvelling for whose behoof she had made herself so bewitching, and then, gnawed by carking jealousy, turned to vent his spleen upon his servant.

But honest Phil only grinned as he twined the bright feathers with a skilful hand, nor heeded his master's ill-humour; for was he not his foster-brother, who loved the ground he trod on with the blind devotion of a clansman? He had been brought up with Terence at a respectful distance, had learnt Bible-stories with him from the tiles about the hearth, and made himself generally useful as he increased in years. Nothing came amiss to him. He could farry, cure a cow of the murrain, tin a saucepan, dance a jig, knit a stocking, sing a cronane against any young fellow in the county. There was nothing he would not do for Master Terence. He followed at his heels like a dog, looking into his eyes for orders as dogs do, bearing his whims and caprices with stoical endurance, as we bear the wind that blows on us. He was a type, was Phil, of a creature who vanished with the century; who, sharp and clever enough, professed to no intellect of his own, and was content to be led in all things by another. His attire under all circumstances was the same. A green plush coat, a scarlet vest, and buckskin breeches. A black leather hunting-cap was always, in or out of doors, cocked on one side of his

shock head. Some people said he went to bed in it. In his capacity of farrier, he invariably carried a firing-iron as a walking-stick ; so that what with the angel in ambush in the dirty finery, and the athletic follower with the firing-iron, Terence Crosbie may be said to have been well protected, even in days when none were out of danger.

The Abbey party had also heard of the arrests, and were all equally pleased when Curran's figure turned the corner of the drive—the queer squat figure which all Dublin looked on with respect, with its tightly-buttoned high-collared coat, snuffy wave of loose necktie, white kerseymere breeches, and top-boots.

‘Yes,’ he said, in answer to a chorus of inquiries, ‘the evil rumour was too true. He had ridden over early to beg my lady to interfere on behalf of the young people. Her influence over the chancellor was great. The father of the Emmetts had been state-physician, and, as such, had often prescribed draughts for the countess's household. Would she try to save his sons from peril?’

‘No, she would not. Lord Clare doubtless had the best motives for what he did, and it would be unseemly in the associate of his leisure-hours to meddle in state affairs. It was plain that the scum must be kept in their place, or what would become of the nobles? The abrogation of the Penal Code was the wild fantasy of optimists; for you might as well give power to monkeys as to Catholics. It could not, should not, be altered or lightened, for

the safety of the dominant minority depended on the Penal Code. The French disgrace of '89 would never have appalled Europe, if the King had been less soft-hearted.'

So spake my lady, in her most majestic way, and Curran, as he smiled at the kindly, narrow-minded woman, thought she looked more like Queen Bess than ever. There was no help to be expected from this quarter for the poor fellows; Doreen's stern face convinced him of that much. He must even buckle on his armour and have at Lord Clare in person, when the first opportunity offered.

Terence's brow darkened as his chief talked of the arrests, and of the outrage at Tone's offices. If the chancellor was personally responsible for the ill-judged performance, then was he distinctly in the wrong. Might there be some truth in the pile of accusations which were being heaped upon the minister in power?

My lady's high-flown babble jarred on his nerves. Is there anything more painful than hearing one you love and respect talking nonsense? But no! It was not possible that the chancellor should be acting as he did without good reason. We are all apt to jump at conclusions and to blame people, without seeking first for motives which may not happen to lie upon the surface. Terence tried to shake off his suspicions, and succeeded to a certain extent, moved thereto, possibly, by feeling Doreen's scrutiny fixed on him. When she appeared on the terrace in her strange costume, she found the

brothers at high words, and reproved them straightway. Shane had used bad language in an undertone; Terence had blushed, and hung his head. There was thunder in the air, which the damsel had striven to dissipate. She was looking anxiously on now, fearful of a collision of antagonistic elements, and bit her lips and stamped her little foot as Shane turned crossly to the visitor.

‘Is it true, Curran,’ he asked, with dyspeptic peevishness, ‘that my brother was with those rascals? I’ve asked him more than once, but it seems he’s afraid to confess.’

‘Afraid!’ Terence cried, as white as ashes; then, catching his cousin’s eye, he went back, with set teeth, to his fly-making.

‘I ought to have said *ashamed*,’ apologised his languid lordship. ‘I presume that, being a Crosbie, you are capable of feeling shame? Or not? You are so queer, I think you were changed at birth.’

‘To please *me*, be quiet,’ implored Miss Wolfe, with an earnestness which charmed my lady. ‘You two are perpetually squabbling!’

‘It is not my fault,’ Terence grumbled, crushing his fingers together to keep down his ire. ‘Never think, please, that I am afraid of you, Shane. We cannot be afraid of that which we despise. If I am queer, you are more so. I did not answer, because I don’t choose that you should interfere with me; but there is no reason why I should not. I was at Robert’s chambers last night. What then? The purity of that handful of fellows shines out through

the general darkness in a way that enforces one's respect. I do not say that they may not be carried too far, but sometimes they make me loathe myself and you and all my belongings; for in the abstract we are bad, and deserve any retribution which may fall on us.'

'Better join them,' sneered Shane, with a feverish hand upon his throbbing temples. 'When they confiscate this property, maybe they'll make you a present of it with the title. Oh, my head!'

'Yes, I was there,' continued Terence, doggedly; 'and they spoke wisdom mixed with folly—with more of the one and less of the other than you are accustomed to bestow on us. I do not mind admitting that I wish I'd stopped. Maybe they'll think that, knowing what was going to happen, I sneaked away, and then I shall lose their esteem.'

'Oho! What a delectable conspirator!' laughed my lord, cooling his aching head against the wall, while the cicatrice on his forehead grew red, and an evil glitter shone in his eyes. 'Love and esteem, eh? And how about mine? Will ye take a corner of that?'

With a spiteful movement he flicked a square of cambric at his brother, who placed his hands behind him and drew back; for the insulting action, innocent in itself, was one much in vogue for egging on a quarrel.

My lady turned as white as Terence, while she cried out hastily:

'Shane! what are you doing?'

Doreen looked on distressed, and Curran sighed, while honest Phil was too discreetly busy with his hackles to note anything that passed.

‘Shane, how dare you, before my face!’ said his mother; then, her anger kindling, she turned sharply on her younger son. ‘It is your fault. You know how easily provoked he is. I cannot wonder at his being shocked by your behaviour.’

‘I too, mother, am easily provoked,’ Terence answered, his brow black with frowns.

‘As I have said before, more than once, though you take no heed, you disgrace yourself by the society you keep. The Emmetts are well enough—I say nothing to the contrary, for indeed their father was a worthy man. But I am told that some of these people are linen-drappers. Is it fitting that a Crosbie should associate with tradesmen? They act blindly because they are low and do not know better, but the same cannot be said of you.’

My lady’s lecture broke down, for whilst speaking of low people she remembered that her favourite Shane also was addicted to low company. Alas! she knew too well that he was the beloved of tavern-roysterers and petticoat-pensioners, who wept oily drops of maudlin affection over his drunken generosity, and that that smart zebra-suit of his—yellow and crimson striped—had not been donned to captivate his family.

If Shane was easily provoked, which was very true, he was also as easily bored as his father.

Rising with a gesture of impatience to retire from the field, he cried out :

‘There, there ! what a pother, to be sure ! I was only in joke. To hear your clatter, mother, one would think the house was burning. If Terence likes linen-drapers, I have no objection, but I can’t admire his taste. Faugh ! He’s no better than a *half-mounted* !’

‘Mother,’ whispered Terence, trembling, ‘do you stand by and hear him ?’

But my lady made as though she was unaware of this fresh taunt, though it was a dreadful one. What a fearful thing for the head of a noble house to brand his heir-presumptive with being a ‘half-mounted !’ Now the half-mounted were a distinct class—a reckless feckless crew, each of whom possessed little beyond his horse and suit of clothes ; who had no principles or education ; who existed by pandering to the vices of their betters. They kept the ground at horse-races, helped a lord to steal a wench, knocked down her male relations, and made themselves generally agreeable ; in return for which they were tolerated, supplied with bed and board, and treated to as much claret as they could carry. They swarmed, not to be industrious like the working bee, but to consume like the drone, and to do mischief like the wasp. This class it was which in ’97 and ’98 developed into the royalist yeomanry—the bully band of licentious executioners who did the filthy work which was disdained by English soldiers. A noble was described by the peasantry

at this time as 'a gentleman to the backbone;' a landed squire as 'a gentleman every inch of him.' The younger sons of one of these, restrained as they were by gentility from any but three professions, sank more often than not into the habits of dissolute idleness to which young Ireland was constitutionally prone, and dwindled into the condition of the 'half-mounted,' whose career was usually closed by a tap from a shillalagh in a brawl, or an attack of delirium tremens. Therefore, that Terence should be accused of being one of the swashbucklers by his overbearing brother cut him to the quick, while it roused as well the anger of the man who was as a second father to him. Mr. Curran might possibly have given the earl a bit of his mind, and so have hammered such a breach 'twixt the two families as both would have deplored in equal measure, had not happily a huge golden coach come rumbling round the corner at this moment, whose gorgeousness attracted general attention, and diverted the thoughts of the group into another channel.

Its body glistened in the sun like brass. Each door-panel was adorned by an allegorical picture by Mr. Hamilton, R.A. A posse of sculptured cupids on the roof groaned under an enormous coronet; Wisdom and Justice, carved and gilded, supported the coachman on either side; while Commerce and Industry stretched forth their cornucopiæ behind and clasped their hands together around the footmen's legs. A triumphal car it was, blazing with gold and colour, enriched with velvet and embroidery,

weighed down with gilded figures, dragged along by six black horses sumptuously caparisoned. This was my Lord Clare's new coach, which had cost him no less than four thousand guineas—the outward and visible sign of his amazing arrogance and splendour. The party on the steps stood wonder-stricken; but what surprised Curran even more than the magnificent carriage, was the presence of the person within it, who sat beside the chancellor. It was Cassidy, the jolly giant, whom report said to be in durance vile. He was released then. So were, of course, the others, and Lord Clare had remedied his blunder before its effects could be seriously felt. So much the better. Such gladness of heart was the little lawyer's that he forgot all about the half-mounted, and proceeded to congratulate his enemy.

'I don't understand,' the latter drawled, looking down from under half-closed lids. 'Mr. Cassidy is out because there was really nothing against him, and his excellency talks of freeing the others by-and-by, except Emmett, who is a ringleader—a beast who must be caged.'

Curran felt a twinge of disappointment. 'A man who must be made a martyr!' he retorted. 'If you leave him languishing, and free the rest, the injustice of the proceeding will set them plotting more than ever. That which is now but a heat-spot may be irritated into a prevailing gangrene. Mind, I have warned you. Yet how idle is it! Such tricks as yours may be expected from a renegade!'

The last words were muttered to himself, yet Lord Clare heard them, but pretended not to do so, as it was always his policy to excite his adversary whilst keeping his own temper.

‘I assure you I am powerless,’ he remarked blandly. ‘The Privy Council——’

‘Potent, grave, and reverend seniors!’ scoffed the other; ‘scene-shifters and candle-snuffers from Smock Alley, robed in old curtains!’

‘These turbulent fellows would destroy the Constitution, my good Curran.’

‘Turbulent! A pack of boys! What does not exist cannot be destroyed. A Commons chosen by the people who hold thereby the strings of the public purse—that is the first principle of a constitution. The sham you prate about is, as you know right well, deluged with corruption, flooded with iniquity, a mere puppet in your hands, Lord Clare. How sad it is that the vital interests of millions should be sacrificed to the vices of an individual! You, and such as you, who have risen from small things to a place in the Upper House, should unite the nobles and the people instead of trying to estrange them. But no, you think of none except yourself. Erin is divided between the slaves of your dominion, the servants of your patronage, the enemies of your tyranny. Your ambition will wreck us all. Your monument shall be the execration of your motherland—the curse of a ruined race your requiem!’

Lord Clare’s impudent leer was doing its work;

for Curran, with every moment, grew more chafed.

‘Really, our friend is quite amusing!’ exclaimed the chancellor, pleasantly. ‘Your ladyship’s jester assumes all the license which custom accords to such persons. I confess that his exuberance bears me down, for the art of managing foolish people is as distinct and arduous as that of governing lunatics.’

‘Whenever I see a man treat the world as if it were made of fools,’ sneered Curran, ‘I suspect him instantly to be a knave.’

‘Very pretty!’ laughed the other. ‘Parliament, my good fellow——’

‘Parliament!’ echoed his foe. ‘You are always ringing the changes on parliament and constitution in a jangle that means nothing. Your parliament has as much to do with the country as a corpse with a crowner’s quest. The rulers of this unhappy land have played bowls with the constitution. Our experience of government is through the vices of its shifting plunderers, instead of the paternal protection of its sovereign—harpies who encamp awhile, then retire laden with spoil—all save one, who, to our grief, is bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. That one, my lord, is splendid indeed—by the grandeur of his infamy—for he never knew shame or decency or conscience! He is double-faced; a traitor to that which he should love most in all the world. He degrades his talent to the vilest uses, and invents sham dangers to hide real ones. Like

the sailor who, to possess himself of a bag of money, tossed a burning brand into the hold, he cries "Fire, fire!" to divert attention from himself.'

'Really, really, my lady!' laughed the chancellor, with constraint, 'your jester improves daily. He wallows in imagery as the swine in mire. My good fellow, I fail to follow your meanderings, though I seem to apprehend that you are cross about these arrests? I have naught to do with them—will you be more comfortable if I swear it?—but I must admit, while doing so, that I am no advocate for ill-judged leniency.'

'If a man is so poor a rider as to cling to his nag by the spurs, he must needs apply a strong curb to control the madness he provokes.'

'And I am that rider? Thank you. Your ladyship's palace resembles the home of the tranced Beauty. It is grievously begirt with thorns and stinging-nettles. I vow I know not why our dear Curran nourishes such asperity against me, for I never did him a favour. But there, there! He's politically insane. A mountebank with one half his talent for rant would make his fortune!'

'Were I one, my lord,' returned Curran, with a bow, 'so presumptuous as to set my little head against the opinions of a nation, I should be glad if folks said I were insane!'

Lord Clare's cheeks were beginning to be unusually rosy, for Doreen gazed at him with undisguised contempt, and my lady was evidently amused in a half-malicious way at the encounter.

‘If you think,’ he said loftily, ‘that it will help you into consequence, you are welcome to bespatter me; but be assured that I value you so little, either as a lawyer or a man, that I must decline to address you further till you learn manners.’

Lord Glandore was enchanted, and almost forgot his headache, for he sniffed a good duel in the wind, and was an artist in such matters.

‘I desired to plead with you against yourself,’ the little man said stiffly, ‘wherein I was a fool, because your heart, as we know, is ice. Nay, I have done; for I may not carry on a conflict wherein victory can bring no honour!’

The countess smiled with thin lips, as Bess may have smiled when Leicester and Essex were bickering. The fact of these sworn foes being constantly here together, was in itself an indirect compliment to her fascinations. Bowing low to her ladyship, Curran trudged across to the stable-yard, whither his pony had trotted before; and Terence, from whose face the devil had been peeping ever since the speech about the half-mounted, followed him in silence thither.

Lord Clare flicked the dust from his pink silk stockings, and plumed himself complacently, as a hawk does after a tussle with some formidable fowl.

‘Fore Gad, my lady,’ he said, ‘you are too indulgent. That animal must be banished from your menagerie, for he is too rough a bear!’

‘A good man and true!’ returned my lady, with decision; ‘despite his sharp tongue and unpre-

possessing shell. He was hard on you, touching you on the raw, and you got the worst of it, and flew in a passion, and were rude, though you pride yourself upon your temper. You must make it up before you sit down to breakfast.'

Terence found his chief standing over his pony, a prey to violent agitation.

'My boy,' he cried out at once, 'I must have a blaze at that rascal!'

'What rascal?' asked the other, who, wounded by his mother's indifference, was brooding on his own trouble.

'There's but one rascal in the world, and his name's Clare! I'll make a window through him, I will, with sword or pistol, as suits him best. Go and tell him so.'

'Most obliging, no doubt,' said Terence, with a half-smile; 'but you must refrain this time, for my sake. Indeed, you employed language such as sure never before was used to a lord chancellor. If he survives your words, no bullet can affect him.'

'It's no use!' persisted the little man, shivering like an aspen; 'I shan't sleep until I shoot that rascal.'

But Terence passed his arm affectionately within his, and Curran perceived that there was something amiss with him.

'You have other duties, my old friend,' the young man sighed. 'Come, come—you must be dignified.'

'Is it I?' returned the other, rubbing his nose ruefully. 'I fear dignity is a robe which he who

would box must lay aside during the sparring. Maybe, when the fight's done, he'll find that it has been stolen during the battle! A fig for dignity! I'd rather have a blaze.'

'No!' pursued the young man, mournfully. 'For my sake, you will abandon this quarrel. I must leave this house, and to whose should I fly if not to yours? I must go away, for this can be borne no longer. There is a limit to human patience, and mine is a small allowance.'

'Do nothing rashly,' Curran urged.

'I tell you I cannot bear it,' the young man retorted with vehemence. 'Who knows to what I might be tempted if Shane should go too far? I tell you I dare not trust myself. And my mother has no sympathy for me, as you saw; for she was superbly indifferent when he threw that insult in my teeth. What cares she if I am insulted or not? Such words from another man, and I would have sprung at his throat at once. When we fear temptation, it is best to run away from it.'

Curran reflected for a moment, and then grunted:

'Boy! Coriolanus replied to his pleading parent, "Mother, you have conquered." To oblige you, I will not shoot Lord Clare.'

'I thank you for making an old woman of me!' Terence replied, with a tinge of humour. 'My conduct was somewhat like a woman's, I confess, for sure no man should bear so great an insult, even from a brother!'

'You know best,' the little man said, patting his

companion's shoulder fondly. 'But it seems sad thus to shake off the dust of your ancestral home. Maybe, if he sees you won't be put upon, my lord may grow more civil. Shane no doubt is trying, and you are a warm-complexioned young gentleman. Having no son, I would gladly take you to fill the vacant place, as no one knows better than yourself. You shall stay with me for a few months, and I'll speak to her ladyship about my lord, who must be taught to cultivate a civil tongue and apologise; for there must be no open rupture between you. We'll say it's for convenience' sake, as I want to make a great lawyer of you. There are briefs you must study for me, and they pour in, you know. How'll I get through the papers at all at all, unless I have my junior near me?'

And thus the matter was settled between them, while the elder wondered what Mrs. Gillin would think of the arrangement. She must be hoodwinked without delay to prevent mischief, or she would come clamouring up to the Abbey in her quality-clothes, and all the fat would be in the fire at once.

Hearing a light footstep on the gravel, Terence turned, and a pang shot through his heart as he beheld his cousin. It was dreadful to leave her behind, in the maw as it were of Shane. Yet what difference could his absence make to one who treated him so scurvily? And those smart garments, too—that aggravatingly bewitching bonnet—for whose behoof were they intended? Not for his, certainly.

All things considered, it was best that he should go.

Meanwhile my lady calmly discussed a late breakfast in the oak parlour with Lord Clare, unconscious that the behaviour of her sons had been more indecorous than usual, while the originator of the quarrel trifled languidly with an egg, speculating about time and place, whether the duel between Curran and the chancellor was to be with sword or pistol. Why not directly after breakfast in the rosary? a capital spot, sheltered from wind and observation. Terence would of course be Curran's second; Cassidy here, who had been hanging about in a deprecatory manner, first on one leg, then on the other, would be the chancellor's; while he, my lord, would see fair play. An excellent arrangement. Then the combatants might amicably return together to Dublin in the golden coach to set about the business of the day.

Having settled the party of pleasure to his liking and reviewed its details, the King of the Cherokees was no little disgusted to see Mr. Curran enter presently and take his seat as if nothing had happened. My lady, on the other hand, was mightily relieved, for she liked the two almost equally well, leaning a little perhaps to the side of the chancellor, on account of his polish and fine manners. She was not blind to the faults of either of her friends. Clare, she knew, despised literature, in which Curran delighted. He disdained the arts of winning; was sullen sometimes, and always overbearing; and when

he condescended to be jocular was usually offensive. But then he was a dazzling light. Curran was particularly interesting to the stately countess by reason of his marvellous energy and originality. He was quicksilver—surcharged with life—restless, sparkling, bewildering; and it amused her to try to control his erratic movements. Many a time she lectured, in private, Curran with reference to Clare—Clare with regard to Curran.

The latter was in the habit of deploring that the former was a patriot lost, seduced by England, because of his aristocratic proclivities. A patriot cannot be a courtier, he constantly declared. The ways of the aristocracy grow more brutal and more reckless with impunity; the coarseness of their debauchery would have disgusted the crew of Comus; their drunkenness, their blasphemy, their ferocity, have left the ignorant English squires far behind. To this the countess would reply (who knew little of the Dublin *monde*, living as she did a retired life) that he was biassed by the prejudice of his Irish slovenliness, in that he could not look upon a man as honest who wore clean linen and velvet small-clothes. And so the friendly conflict would go on, one scoring a point and then the other, one breaking into rage and the other apologising; and so the incongruous cronies wrangled along the road of life, battling with the breezes which blew round them, whether from east or west.

Mr. Curran sat down to his breakfast as if nothing had happened, tucking a napkin into his vest, and

handing my Lord Clare, with biting amiability, the salt or the butter or the bread, while my lady marked with satisfaction that this tempest was but a squall. That the chairs of Terence and her niece should remain unoccupied was a matter of no moment, for the former was probably sulky after his snubbing; while as for Doreen, her conduct was always more or less improper. Perhaps her serene ladyship would have been ruffled if she could have looked on them in the stable-yard, for they were standing very close together, the one subdued by the prospect of leaving his home for the first time, the other saddened with thinking of the arrests.

They stood very close together, oblivious of the morning meal; and Terence caressed the moist muzzles of the hounds with lingering fingers, while his cousin observed that an interesting air of sadness suited him. A too healthy look, a too ruddy cheek, are to be deprecated as unfavourable to romance; yet is there a peculiar and specially captivating interest about a humdrum exterior with a blight on it. Terence was too fat and sleek; unheroic, prosaic to an absurd degree. At least his cousin chose to think so as she looked at him. Then she glanced down at her own fine raiment with disgust, and hated prosperity. What right had she to flaunt in delicate muslins while her people were in bondage? Sackcloth and ashes would become her better, now that the last champions of her faith were pining in duress. As for the youth here, it was only fitting that he should be fat and sleek; for

was he not a Protestant, one of the oppressors? What was his trouble to her trouble—sorrow for a race ground down? True, his mother loved him not, and his brother was inconsiderate. He should have spoken boldly, putting his foot down as Doreen would have done, though his was big and hers was tiny—demanding at least some sort of respectful consideration, instead of wrapping himself in injured airs as he proposed to do. And as the thought passed through her mind it was touched by a tinge of self; for if Terence were to go away, one of the safeguards of his cousin's peace would slip from her. With the instinct of intrigue, which is planted in the staidest of female bosoms, she had determined that the best way, perhaps, of counter-acting her aunt's eccentric marriage scheme would be to play one brother off against the other. As to a match with Shane, that was out of the question; to marry Terence would be equally undesirable. Even now, the wistful humility with which he surveyed her fairy bonnet was conducive only to laughter. He did not care for her any more than she cared for him—of course not. But is it not *de rigueur* for youths to sigh intermittently after domesticated cousins till the moment for the *grande passion* arrives, when they breathe like furnaces and threaten to fling themselves out of windows? His was clearly a case of primary intermittent fever, which was not a serious cause for alarm; and the damsel was quite justified in employing its vagaries for the protection of her own peace. My lady's

project, she considered, would tumble to pieces in time through inherent weakness. Till that auspicious moment arrived it would be necessary to stave off a crisis. It was merely a matter of time—a brief struggle between two strong wills, in which my lady would succumb, as she invariably did when pitted against her stubborn niece. For this reason it was annoying that Terence should go away, and Doreen felt tempted to employ such arts as she might, without being unmaidenly, for the prevention of a family split. She said therefore, with a distracting glance of her brown eyes, while eager muzzles wormed into her hand :

‘Is this quite irrevocable ? The house will be so dull without you.’

‘I would stay if you really wished it,’ blurted out the inflammable youth, pinching a cold nose till the dog—its owner—broke away howling. ‘You know there is nothing I would not do to please you, Doreen !’

‘Is there not ?’ she returned, with a ring of bitterness, for she was too straightforward to feel aught but impatience for idle protestations. ‘To please me, would you give up all for Erin, as Theobald has done ? No—you would not. A fine-weather sailor, Terence ! You give up anything, who have all your life been lapped in luxury—and why should you ? Thanks to Mr. Curran, the legal ball is at your foot, and you only need to work to become rich and happy. But I shall be sorry to miss your bright face, for all that.’

A second flash, as of a burn in sunlight, carried the lad beyond his usual prudence. With disconcerting suddenness he seized her hand and brought his flushed cheek close to hers.

‘Doreen!’ he gasped. ‘If you will love me and be my wife, I will do anything and bear anything. You’ve only to direct. I’m poor I know, but I will work, for I am capable of better things if I have an object.’

But Miss Wolfe, though far from a coquette, was gifted with presence of mind. Her intention had been not to provoke an untoward declaration such as would exasperate her aunt, and, possibly, Lord Glandore; but to use this impulsive swain as a bulwark of protection against the assaults of my lady. Perchance, under the circumstances, it was better that he should depart for a few months to cool his too explosive ardour. It would not do to encourage, nor yet to quarrel with him. She escaped from him therefore, holding up her pretty hands, and said demurely:

‘Of course, if Mr. Curran really wishes it, you had better obey. It is a long ride for you every morning from the Abbey to the Four-courts.’

The Priory, on the other side of Dublin, was about the same distance from the Four-courts, Terence thought with anger. The girl was playing with him, as she always did.

‘I hope Sara will make you comfortable,’ she went on. ‘No doubt she will, she is so sweet a girl. Then we shall meet at Castle balls, and you

shall lead me out for a rigadoon like a mere stranger. That will be funny, will it not? You don't mean what you say one bit, and it is a relief to me to know that it is all flummery—you silly, hot-pated, blarneying Pat! Come along. We will go and eat our breakfast and be thankful that we have one to eat, instead of talking nonsense. That is all that you or I are fit for, I am afraid! For it is not such as you nor I who are destined to save poor Ireland!



CHAPTER IX.

THE PRIORY.



YEAR went by, and Terence was still away from home, an inmate of the Priory; settled down, much against his will, as a sober councillor, principal assistant to Mr. Curran, the continually rising advocate. Sober is scarcely the fitting epithet, for conviviality was the besetting sin of all classes of Irish in the eighteenth century, and it was notorious that legal gentlemen, from Judge Clonmel to the meanest attorney, were constantly in the habit of going drunk to roost. Where lawyers led, Dublin was fain to follow, for the Bar took the lead in the society of the metropolis, occupying a strong middle position of its own between 'gentlemen to the backbone' and 'half-mounted' ditto, from which it dictated to both. As the policy of ministers grew more and more unpopular, it became more and more urgent that Government patronage

should be expended in purchasing support for the measures under which the country groaned ; and where could support be more easily found than among the exponents of forensic wisdom ?

Successfully to do battle with Flood and Grattan it was necessary to scrape together as much intellect as was available, and so every promising barrister became certain of a seat in parliament if he would furbish up his brains for the Viceroy's benefit. This gave to the lawyers a prestige which drew sons of peers within their ranks, and they assumed superior airs, which no man challenged, in that their profession was a nursery to the senate—a step-ladder to the highest honours. Younger sons of noble houses invariably lean towards the middle class, because a wide difference of income divides them in feeling and ways of thought from their elder brothers. Such lordlings as possessed a competence chose to while away their hours elegantly in gowns and bands. And so the Bar became the fashion, the lawyers being credited with such attributes as they thought proper to adopt, and being permitted to wield an arbitrary sway which was beneficial and mirth-inspiring. They assumed the right of mind over matter, and people bowed the knee without inquiry, for they were pre-eminently jolly dogs who made life the merrier, whose scraps of legal lore sounded mightily sonorous to ignorant ears, and who, if one was rash enough to presume to dispute their law, were always ready to take refuge behind the inevitable pistol. But

human nature at its best is frail, and even lawyers are not always pure. When came the tug of war—when the Four-courts were closed and courts-martial juggled away men's lives—the councillors prated no more of their incorruptible virtue, but donned the uniform as others did, and truckled, with a few bright exceptions, as meanly as the rest.

But we are now in 1796, when King Claret ruled the roast; when all were besotted with drink, from Clonmel who gave sentence with a drop in his eye, to the beggar in the dock who starved his stomach to buy a drain of spirits; when out of the six thousand houses which formed Dublin, thirteen hundred were occupied as boozing-kens; when guests were deprived of their shoes by a host who understood hospitality, and broken glass was sprinkled in the passages to prevent a man from jibbing at his liquor.

Mr. Curran's fears were being realised in this year of '96, for the criminal business to which he had turned his attention was increasing on his hands through the swelling torrent of treasonable charges. My Lord Clare's policy was bearing its full crop of evils, for he had succeeded in moulding the too plastic Viceroy into the shape that suited him, according to the plan laid down by Mr. Pitt. Lord Camden, whilst meaning to do well, was repeatedly led astray, as many a better man has been before him. To Clare he was a docile cat. He submitted to the secret council of Lords—that

mysterious wehmgericht—who were urged by the chancellor to the most violent proceedings, and became unconsciously a scapegoat for the bearing of the sins of others.

Under skilful manipulation the Society of United Irishmen flourished prodigiously. Tom Emmett and Neilson were kept in prison, where they languished without trial. Others were let out and caged again as occasion required, that they might inflame their fellows with a catalogue of dread experiences. Midnight meetings resulted, wherein orators declaimed of the wickedness of the perfidious one, and summoned all true patriots to take the fatal oath. The decision which had been come to on the disastrous night in Trinity was carried out to the letter, and was much assisted in its fulfilment by the harsh treatment of the chiefs. The military system was engrafted on the civil.

Faithful to his promise, Cassidy rode to Belfast, delivered Emmett's order to the delegates there, and then with commendable prudence subsided into the background. The provincial committee spread out its arms, from which new ones were speedily engendered, and passed resolutions of grave import, while England stifled her merriment. Civil officers were to wear military titles. A secretary over twelve was to become a petty officer with gewgaws on his coat; a delegate over five of these, a captain, with more gewgaws; a superior over five captains, a colorel with a plume; mighty fine! The colonels of each county were to send three names to

the central directory, from which one was to be chosen adjutant-general of his county to deal directly with the capital. And thus a national army was forming in the dark, just as the Volunteer army had sprung up in the daylight, with the important difference that by this time England had cured her wounds and regained her pristine strength.

I protest that this linen-draper-medley masquerading in galoon would be laughable, were it not so sad a spectacle. But who shall dare to laugh at honest men, whose delusions are nursed and played upon instead of being tenderly swept away? Curran's sympathies were with the reformers, but not his judgment; and he became a sort of link between two parties. His position as a lawyer gave him the *entrée* to the best houses, whilst his homely habits and untidy dress caused the lower orders to look on him as one of themselves. Between the rival parties he shillyshallied with a weakness which his character belied, grumbling at the patriots for their imprudence, growling at the sins of Government, very uncomfortable in his mind, and of no use so far to either of the opposing factions.

As the members of the society committed themselves more deeply, Lord Clare became more gay. He hinted to the half-mounted gentry that if they liked it they might volunteer as active agents against the misguided youths who were preparing to turn Ireland topsy-turvy. Nothing could please the squireens better than this tacit permission to give

vent to their worst passions. Brutal, cruel, sycophantic (as ignorant and depraved natures are), they began to band themselves in regiments, with nobles for superior officers, and to commit outrages on those below them, pretty certain that they would be indemnified for any atrocity they might commit. *L'appétit vient en mangeant.* The peasant, ground down and wretched to the level of the serf of Elizabeth, howled out that Justice was indeed fled, and hearkened with ravenous avidity to the voice of the charmer who sang of French ships in the offing, and a proximate term to misery. Drilling went on under cover of night, and the practice of the pike, since gunpowder could not be purchased; and the shibboleth anent the bough which was to be planted in England's crown might be heard a hundred times in whispers on every market-day.

But, misery or no misery, folks must eat and drink, and the Hibernian nature—as quick to resent as to forgive, as vehement as indiscreet—is given to extremes, from sadness to mirth and back again.

Mr. Curran, though his heart was sore, was fond of dainty viands, and beguiled himself, as others did, with the pleasures of the table; striving to drown, with a clatter of knives and forks, the din of approaching tempest. His board was ever sumptuously garnished, his claret of the best, his welcome of the warmest, and few who were bidden to partake of it ever declined his hospitality.

Timid Arthur Wolfe, who was growing more

cautious every day, and doing his best to serve two masters for his daughter's sake, implored his friend to take example by himself, demonstrating in the clearest way that the history of my Lord Clare was becoming the history of all Ireland, and that a man with a child's future in his hands has no right to run a-muck. He had found out that the chancellor had endeavoured to buy Curran, and failing ignominiously in that attempt, was trying to undermine his business. Why be for ever snarling at Lord Clare? It would be the old story of the pipkin and the iron pot. To which arguments Curran answered, laughing:

'Is it I that's the frog, and he the bull? Maybe it'll turn out t'other way. I'm mad, no doubt, to set my small pebble to stop his chariot, but many a trivial thing has proved the factor in a great catastrophe, and I'll even insert my pebble. Fudge, Arthur! I'm too popular, and my life's too open for even Lord Clare to wreak his vengeance on me.'

Then Arthur Wolfe persisted, entreating that at least he would avoid the charge of holding seditious meetings at his house. The weekly dinners at the Priory were jovial, he admitted, beyond compare. The cup went round as merrily as if Erin were a buxom wench, dimpled, and well-to-do—but there could be no denying that those who drank of it were marked men mostly, who knew the inside of Newgate as well as the Priory parlour, and these were ticklish times for political flirtation. What

would befall Sara, honest Arthur pleaded, if an accident were to befall the councillor? So delicate a blossom would shrivel under the first frost-nipping. On her father's head must rest the consequence if misfortune crushed his child.

At mention of Sara Mr. Curran would become exceedingly perplexed, torn by two apparently incompatible duties, as he reflected on his pale primrose. How wonderful are the decrees of Fate! Why are beings, abnormally sensitive and delicate—whose fibres are liable to injury by the most careful handling—pitchforked into a world of stones for the express purpose of being bruised? Sara's nature was one which needed sun and flowers, hourly solicitude and broidered blanketing, yet here was she cast upon a rocky coast, battered by cold winds, which threatened to become each day more easterly! Was she sent to earth merely to bear pain, to linger for a space in more or less protracted agony, and then to die? Possibly. It is a cruel creed to accept, but the experience of the world we live in forces it upon us. Perchance we shall learn to see a reason for it later on.

The crash was coming, as none perceived more clearly than Mr. Curran. Might anything avert it? Nothing. What would happen to cherished ones in the throes of the hurricane? But how bootless was such self-communing! *Fais ce que devra!* Mr. Curran was determined not to shrink from duty to the soil which gave him birth. Though the days of Roman virtue were overpast, he would sacrifice his

heart's treasure on the altar if need were, trusting to God's mercy for the rest; and it was the kernel of his project to keep watch over the society—with it in the spirit, but not of it in the body. He was wont to say with pride that he had never wittingly snubbed any man who was in earnest. Self-willed himself, he respected those who strove to make themselves, and respected men doubly if their aspirations were unselfish. He said to himself that the motives of this small self-sacrificing band were pure where all else was foul; that though for their own sakes he dared not espouse their tenets openly, yet it would be a coward's act to deprive them of his countenance and advice because they walked in danger. So he shook his head at time-serving Arthur Wolfe, and went his independent way, and waited for his chosen guests each Wednesday afternoon, caring no fig for Lord Clare's menaces, sorry only that he continued to exist.

He stood straddle-legged at the hour of five on a reception-day, among the dishevelled laurestinus bushes, which he was pleased to call his avenue, swinging his portly watch by its ribbon—as his way was when guests were late. The Priory was a snug abode, if not endowed with beauty; but then the works of man in Ireland are seldom in beautiful accordance with the handiwork of God. It was a frightful ungainly villa erected in the hideous style of Irish suburban architecture, with attenuated slits of windows and tall consumptive doors set half-way up in a bald waste of rough whitewashed wall.

The usual alpine stair led to the entrance ; arranged, as it appeared, for the purpose of setting an honoured guest on a glorious pinnacle of observation, till slipshod Kathy could hitch up her dragged skirts to let him in.

From the parlour window might be admired a prospect of barn, dunghill, dovecote, horsepond, piggery, which offered to the nose in summer a bouquet of varied sweets ; while the usual yard or two of road swept round the usual dark circular grassplot with a mouldy rhododendron in the centre of it. The orchard behind was christened by its owner his pistol-gallery, but it was at the same time a forum ; for there might Mr. Curran frequently be seen of a morning, declaiming with Demosthenic energy, whilst he lodged bullets at intervals in the bark of special trees.

The odour of savoury viands assailed his nostrils as he stood statue-like on the pinnacle and whirled his watch, for he hated unpunctuality above all things. His beetle-brows were knit, his lower lip protruded, and he wondered whether any of his guests had been arrested. That was naturally his first fear, and he wagged his head with gloom at some ducks that quacked in a neighbouring puddle as he surveyed the lugubrious possibility.

‘ Idiots ! ’ he moralised. ‘ Pictures of ourselves, who dream of dinner as though sorrow could not wake. Alas ! Fate is common and the future is unseen, as the Arab proverb has it. You rejoice in the balmy showers, do you ?—not knowing, in your

crass ignorance, that they will make the peas grow ! And here are we, as foolish as you, going in for a jollification, as though a few months might not bring grief to all of us ! Ahem ! It is well that we are a careless nation, or every Irishman would cut his throat before he grew to manhood.'

Terence, who was drawing corks as if catering for an army, laughed aloud, for he at least showed no signs of brooding melancholy ; being prepared rather to take life as he found it, and enjoy it too, for his bright brave nature endeared him to all, and he was himself too frank to believe in the pervading blackness of the human heart. As Doreen pictured, he had attended the Castle balls during the winter, and had led out his cousin for a turn of *passepied* or *rigadeon* without much sighing ; had dutifully called on his mother when Shane was safe away, and had spent the rest of his time yawning over briefs for the behoof of Mr. Curran.

These briefs caused little disputes sometimes between the two, which it became Sara's duty to smooth away—for Terence was woefully idle and abhorred his work, being wont to declare that intellectual labour was one thing, and unintellectual drudgery another, till his chief waxed exceeding wroth, and asserted that idleness led to mischief. Sometimes there appeared a flickering flame of ambition in him, which Curran tried hard to foster ; but before he had time to fan it, Terence would cry, ' Oh, bother !' and, flinging the brief into the garden, go forth to fish with Phil. No one could be angry

with him long. Idleness seems to suit some natures, which appear moulded for the enjoyment of other people's labour.

In the ways of the world Terence was an infant ; in the balance of right and wrong inclined to be unsteady from sheer indolence of brain. His bubbling, brawling flow of spirits deceived casual observers, who set him down as frivolous, impelled by the lightest breeze. Doreen, whose experience was limited, thought him so with a feeling of affection, in which contempt was mingled ; but Curran knew better. He knew that many a sensitive man wilfully assumes a disparaging exterior to mask his holy of holies even from himself. He knew that few among us ever quite know ourselves ; but wake up sometimes in the decline of life to discover new virtues or new vices, of whose existence we were quite unconscious ; that we come to know our own characters by flashes, just as we learn those of our nearest and dearest friends.

Terence was a general favourite ; a hearty devil-may-care young fellow, with a good digestion and few individual troubles, and was looked upon with awe by gentle little Sara, as he helped in her household cares. Indeed, Mr. Curran was justified in being cross this day, for the repast was ready, if the guests were not. Veal, turkey, ham—all piping hot—smoked in their respective dishes. Powldoody oysters smiled as a centre-piece, flanked by speckled trout, caught but an hour ago by Terence's servant Phil. Rows of wine-bottles garnished the parlour

wainscoting ; the trim little hostess was squeezing lemons into a jug on the hearthstone, with a view to prospective punch. He spun his watch faster and faster as moments waned, more and more certain that something untoward must have happened, and was no little relieved by the sound of horses' feet, and the sight of his party approaching.

'Hooroo, boys !' he cried cheerily, shaking off his gloom. 'Ye're late, but no mather ; ye're welcome, and shall carry home what ye like with ye, rather than an appetite.'

Sara had a becoming blush ready for her undergraduate, as he approached to kiss her hand. She looked shyly in his eyes, and marked with uneasiness that they were growing very dreamy, while an habitual contraction fretted his forehead, which she knew came from distress about his brother. She knew—for sometimes she took entrancing walks with him—that his temper was becoming soured and his spirit chafed, in that Tom languished on in prison without trial. Was not such injustice outrageous ? The charges against him were grave, no doubt ; that bit of paper which blundering Cassidy had failed to swallow was compromising in a high degree ; but then others quite as much compromised were let off long since with a fine, whilst Tom remained untried. Any trial—before a jury however packed—would be better than such lingering suspense. If the worst came to the worst, the crown of martyrdom, which would go with conviction, would be some small comfort ; but to have

lain rotting in a gaol for a year, to be immured without a term till well-nigh forgotten, was like the death of a rat in a hole; and as ardent young Robert thought of it, his constitutional dread of bloodshed almost went from him. Seeing what he was forced to see, he regretted his oath in no-wise.

Among many enthusiasts few were so enthusiastic as this boy—few looked so hopefully for news of Tone and of his doings in France. The newspaper of his imprisoned brother had somehow revived, though the guiding hand was shackled, and wonderful articles appeared in its pages which might well have brought down, for the second time, the chancellor's vengeful claw on it. But such rash ebullitions of an imprudent ardour were just what Lord Clare required. Nobody knew who edited Tom's journal now (possibly many had a finger in it). It certainly was not Robert, for he was but eighteen and a student still of Trinity; but that he helped and gambolled on the chasm's verge, his friends did know, and remonstrated with him more than once.

Curran was constantly lecturing him, but without effect, for the froward boy only bade him attend to his own affairs; suggested that if he wanted to save somebody from the vortex he had better look after his own future son-in-law, and this made Curran angry. Yes; this was one of the things which had resulted from Terence's leaving home. Busybodies had winked and nodded, declaring that the little lawyer was wise in his generation; that,

having feathered his nest, he might do worse for Sara than introduce her into the peerage with a plump dowry. If a trifle reckless he was shrewd, they said; for whilst dallying with the United Irishmen he had taken care to drag along with him the brother of a great lord, who could not well interfere on behalf of a near kinsman without also throwing the ægis of his rank over another who ran in couples with him. The busybodies talked nonsense, as they generally do. Mr. Curran had no views as yet with regard to Sara, and required the protection of no aristocratic ægis. His reputation had risen so high during the last twelve months by reason of the splendid bravery with which he had defended the foes of established government, that neither Pitt nor Clare dared at this moment to touch the champion. His place at the Bar was so unique that there was no man, not merely next, but near him. Other advocates were to him as the stars to the sunbeam. In court he was at once persuasive, eloquent, acute, argumentative; striking with cunning hand the chord of pity, then (for he knew his audience) checking the rising tear with laughter. As a cross-examiner he was unrivalled. Let truth and falsehood be ever so intricately dovetailed, he could part them with a touch. Swiftly he would place his finger on a vital point, untwist a tangle and involve perjury in the confusion of its contradictions. So long as he retained his purity, it would never do to assail this Galahad.

All were aware of that, and so he needed no help from a great lord.

Yet many wondered whether he might be secretly afraid of being ensnared; whether, foreseeing the struggle that was imminent, he might not deem it prudent to prepare a sure method of escape. The children of darkness have more ways of circumventing the children of light than it is at all pleasant for you and me (who of course belong to the latter category) to reflect upon. He was ill judged, possibly, in throwing a young man like Terence into too close contact with the would-be reformers. But then was not that youth already a friend of the Emmetts and of Tone? Was not his innate laziness a bulwark of defence? Was he not in the habit of defending Lord Clare, and of pointing out that party-spirit embitters people to the point of shameful slander? As yet he declined to admit that the chancellor had horns and hoofs.

Although he scorned the worldly-wise advice of Arthur Wolfe, Mr. Curran was careful, when he could, to check open expressions of sedition at his table. On this very day he found it necessary several times to change the current of talk before the cloth was removed, when Sara, nodding pleasantly to Terence and to her undergraduate, rose and withdrew to her chamber.

But there was a special reason on this particular day for an extra amount of wrath on the part of the young men, his guests, which did not fail to produce its answering growl from their host. That

fresh arbitrary arrests should have taken place surprised him not at all—such proceedings were of daily occurrence. That Sirr, the town-major, should be enlarging his paid army of false-witnesses, who were becoming notorious as ‘the band of testimony,’ was also, alas, no new thing. That a man’s life could be sworn away by one witness who had never seen him before was an awful fact; but then he, Mr. Curran, was at hand to protest, and the recognised forms of law still permitted an accused sometimes to baffle the paid malice of the informer.

It was an open question, all admitted, how far a government might go in espionage. In moments of peril to the public weal it is certain that ministers must draw their information from any quarter, however foul; but to offer a premium to rascality is surely criminal. To gain information of facts from detectives is quite a different matter from the employment of secret agents to tempt people into sin and then hound them down. Robert Emmett brought news with him this day that seemed to foreshadow a change of tactics on the part of the executive—ominous news the discussion of which had made the party late upon the road, and which caused the young men, so soon as their hostess had retired, to abandon social gossip for more grave communion.

‘Friends,’ Robert said, ‘they intend to exasperate us. There can be no more doubt about it, though I am in the dark as to their motives.

Please God, Theobald's mission will be accomplished ere 'tis too late ; the French will come to our succour before we are goaded to despair.'

Cassidy, who had such a blundering tendency to do the wrong thing in the wrong place, here broke out into a new ditty which was beginning to be popular, trolling forth in his mellow voice :

'The French are on the say, says the Shan van Vocht ;
And will be here without delay, says the Shan van Vocht ;'

but he was sternly bidden to fill his glass and pass the round-bottomed bottle without making himself noisily objectionable ; and, whatever other peccadillo he might think proper to commit, above all things to drink fair.

'Major Sirr's banditti,' the undergraduate went on, so soon as the bottle, being empty, could be laid down, 'have taken on them a new function. They arrogate to themselves now a right of paying domiciliary visits without search-warrants, of forcing open a person's door whensoever the outrage may suit their whim. A year ago they wormed their way into Trinity, and by an accident we were unable to rouse the college.'

'Arrah, thin,' grumbled Cassidy, 'will ye always be pitching my big shoulder sand empty head in my teeth ? I was sorry for my awkwardness, and that's enough.'

'But at that time they were right to take us, if they could ; for in truth we were conspiring—a red-letter day in my memory, the day I took the oath !

Hearken to this, all of you ! You know Tim Flanagan, of Ormond's Quay, whose lady—God rest her soul !—was brought to bed a week ago ? She died, so did the child, last night ; and Tim, gone wild with sorrow, threw himself on the floor beside the corpse, refusing to be comforted. There came a knocking at his warehouse entry ; it was barred, and the men away. His sister, from a window, desired to know what was wanted. Sirr answered that he was come to search the house—for what, in the Lord's name ? Gunpowder cannot be bought. The sister offered money if they would respect their grief, but not enough. In the warehouses nothing compromising was found, of course. The room where the corpse lay was to be searched also. They battered in the door of the guarded chamber, but recoiled in a fright, for Tim stood with a threatening glare of madness beside his young wife, a knife clutched in his right hand. They fled, these myrmidons who disregarded an agony of soul which a savage would respect ; and Tim knelt down there and then, with his appalled sister, swearing, on the blue lips of her who was gone before, an eternal enmity against the Castle tyrants.'

There was a long silence, during which Curran hung his head, while the brow of his junior darkened, and honest Phil, his goggle-eyed henchman, poured claret in his master's lap instead of into his glass.

'It is horrible !' sighed Cassidy, and swore a

string of oaths. 'Tim Flanagan had fought shy of the society,' he shouted, 'but now would surely join it. His was but one case out of many. The wickedness of those in power would surely drive all Ireland to take the oath, and then the sons of the soil would rise as one man and hunt the tyrants into the Channel.'

Mr. Curran shook his rough head.

'They are working for a purpose, as Robert says,' he remarked; 'a wicked purpose, which aims at our eternal slavery. Instead of sowing seeds of wholesome trees, beneath which our children may seek shelter, they cherish poisonous roots, with the intent to squat like witches in a plantation of nightshade. You will never hunt them into the Channel. Do you know that they are flooding the island with troops—*disciplined* troops, who will part your ill-trained myriads like water? I see their aim, though they would fain hide it till the fruit is ripe. They will goad us by insidious outrage to despair, then stamp on us with an overwhelming force, and, when we are faint and bleeding, will tie us, gagged and chained, to the car of England for evermore.'

'What do you mean?' Terence inquired sternly.

'I mean,' responded his chief, 'that when we are ground into the dust, they will sweep us from the list of nations. Cobwebs will gather round the locks of our senate-house; our exchange will be silent as the tomb, our docks empty, our quays deserted. England will swallow us body and soul; will devour our liberty, and with it our existence.'

‘Never!’ bawled impetuous Cassidy. ‘We will die first, if it’s thrue what he says, and he’s more wise than I. We are men, aren’t we, who can die but once? Shall we lie down to be whipped, like dancing-dogs? There’s no going back, except for cowards, boys! All must fall in, or be disgraced. What say you, Master Crosbie, will you sit by and see Ould Erin sold?’

The excitement of this bellowing athlete was contagious.

‘If I believed that there was one tittle of truth in the suspicions of my old friend, I’d take the oath to-morrow,’ cried Terence, with a slap upon the table. ‘But he exaggerates.’

‘Do I?’ growled Curran. ‘I say that they mean to unite Ireland to England, and that their present operations are tending to that end; and I also affirm that, whether you take the oath or whether you do not, that important ceremony will have no effect whatever on the end—you coxcomb!’

‘Be their intentions what they may, there is no going back now,’ echoed young Robert, sipping his claret dreamily. ‘All who have a real stake in the country must see that. Is not our first stake our national honour? and how may we bow our necks beneath the Saxon’s heel without eternal shame? The truculent, bloody Saxon! who has left his track like a livid welt across our land, in altars polluted and laid low, pledges made and broken, a long trail of lust and rapine and crime.’

A faint smile flitted over Cassidy’s features, for

this was the turgid eloquence of the mysterious newspaper whose editor was in Newgate.

‘Boy, you chatter balderdash,’ Curran snapped shortly; ‘such balderdash as the ignorant drink too eagerly for truth. Oh for a little ballast to keep us steady! An Irishman, when not stranded on the Scylla of indolence, is certain to flounder head-foremost on the Charybdis of enthusiasm; and, of the two dangers, the latter is generally the worst.’

‘Deed, it’s thrue what ye say, councillor dear,’ Cassidy murmured, in a coaxing tone. ‘But sure, though you rail at us, you would not stand by neither, any more nor this young gentleman? We know well enough your heart is with us.’

‘You are no better than baaing sheep following one another into the shambles,’ answered the host testily, for he was taken aback by this open assault upon himself and Terence. ‘Your ill-digested plans must fail.’

‘Fail!’ echoed Robert and Cassidy together. ‘Why,’ continued the former, forgetting his horror of bloodshed, ‘when the time comes we shall count upon a hundred thousand men. I know it by the returns sent in to the Directory.’

‘On paper.’

‘And the French will be here in force—the veterans of the Republic.’

‘The French, the French!’ growled Curran. ‘Say that they land and beat the armies of King George, which I much doubt; will they not soon weary of a precarious possession, and, carrying you

to market in some treaty of peace, barter you away to be well scourged? I vow I have no patience with you, grieved though I be for the humble order of the people, who from lack of education are easily deluded. Depend upon it, your acts are all known in London. By the time you are ready, the towns will seethe with British troops. I tremble to think of the result.'

'Would ye have us turn the cheek like good Christians, then?' jeered the giant, who, under influence of wine, was becoming warm. 'Are the sons of the ancient kings meekly to become galley-slaves?'

'What would I have ye do?' retorted the host, who perceived with wrath that he was being driven into a corner. 'I'd have ye keep a civil tongue, and talk no treason till ye're outside my privet-hedge. If ye do not, I'll report what's been said to Clare; I will, upon my honour, to save ye from worse folly.'

The sturdy little man looked as if he were quite capable of carrying out his threat. If he were to disclose all he knew of them, it would be terrible indeed.

Cassidy, the claret mounting to his muddled brain, seized a decanter with the laudable intention of belabouring his host with it.

'A traitor!' he muttered fiercely. 'That's the lowest beast that crawls. If ye spake ere a word of us, I'll pistol ye in the street!'

The lawyer looked calmly up at the menacing giant and laughed. 'Put it down, big baby,' he

said. ‘ You dare to think me half-hearted because I won’t take a pike and try to knock down St. Patrick’s. Does any man in Ireland love Erin more than I ? Learn, fool, that men have different functions assigned to them. Do your best, if God wills it so. When the battle’s lost ye’ll want me to bind your gashes. I’ve listened to much rubbish this afternoon. Now you, in your turn, listen to the truth, which is bad enough—ochone ! I *know* that all your martial goings-out and comings-in are reported one by one ; I *know* that they are broidered and embellished before they cross the sea. I have reason to suspect—I admit I cannot prove it yet—that such cooked accounts are given of your doings as actually to alarm the British cabinet. You are playing into Pitt’s hands. I have heard that they even talk of “ martial-law ” as possible. If they come to that, the Lord be merciful to our poor Erin ! ’

Mr. Curran’s head sank on his breast, and tears ran down his rugged cheeks ; while the conspirators glanced one at the other with pallid faces. Martial law ! rough and ready tribunals presided over by the tools of England ! Sure their host’s terrors must carry him away. And yet he might be right, judging from the past. It was quite possible that they were being deliberately driven to the shambles in cold blood—like victims marked out for slaughter by some savage despot. Cassidy laid down the decanter, and began to stammer apologies for his petulance.

The noise of voices at high words brought Sara into the room, who, frightened at the sudden dread which seemed to have invaded the party, clung to her father, while she turned an inquiring glance to the undergraduate.

‘What is it, father?’ she murmured with dim fear, for the adored face of Robert was distorted with passion, while his hands shook like leaves.

‘A Union is it that they want?’ the boy muttered ’twixt chattering teeth. ‘I will resist it to the last gasp of my existence—to the last drop of my blood—and when death comes, I will call down the eternal curse of Heaven upon the destroyers of our freedom!’

Sara felt dizzy, and would have fallen but for her father’s encircling arm. Dark shadows of foreboding were flitting across her mind. Was he whom she elected to worship to be drawn into the whirlpool after all? Was Robert to share Theobald’s fate—to be banished from friends and motherland? In her gentle loving heart she registered a vow that if that fate should come on him, the sorrow of his exile should be soothed by no hand but hers.

Mr. Curran set himself to calm his darling. ‘Silly child!’ he said, patting her yellow curls. ‘There, there, why not in bed? Fie! young ladies mustn’t rush in where gentlemen are toying. Well, as ye are here, pick up the materials from the hearth, my love, and squeeze in another lemon. This won’t do. I shall lose my reputation as a *bon viveur*. A sentiment? Bravo! Here ’tis. Come, bumpers!’

“If a man fills the bottom of his glass, more shame to him if he doesn’t fill the top; and if he empties the top, sure he’d not be so base as to deny the bottom the same compliment!” Now we’ll lock the doors, and my big friend shall expend his exuberance in song. A toast first. You too shall sip of it, my blossom, for there’s ne’er a bit of treason in it.’ Then, clasping Sara’s slender waist, he raised his haggard eyes, and said solemnly: ‘As God in these latter days is unfolding in His creatures strange new powers, so may they all tend to Freedom, Peace, and Harmony. May those who are free never be enslaved—may those who are slaves be speedily set free. Amen!’

Cassidy, quite good-humoured and repentant now—for his bark was always more awful than his bite—tuned up and sang his choicest ditties; yet somehow there was a pall over the party which music could not dissipate. Truths had slipped out in the desultory talk which weighed down the souls of all. Mr. Curran, usually a pearl among hosts, was worried and absent, for, look at the situation as he would, there was nothing to be seen but impending disaster, and he thought that perhaps he had spoken out too openly. Terence, too, seemed much disturbed in mind; more moved at Robert’s story and his own hints than he liked to see. Perchance it would be safest to pack him home without delay. Yet no—his was not the soul-harrowing indignation which exercised the patriots. He was shocked, but there was no real danger of his being trapped. It would

lie heavy on his conscience, though, if this artless joyous creature should be dragged into the vortex. Much better that he should shoot, and hunt, and fish, and make the most of the happy accident of his social standing. Certainly he would show little affection for his *protégé* if he permitted him to be trapped, and Cassidy showed wondrous anxiety to trap him. An odd person, Cassidy; a whimsical combination of opposing essences; one of those dangerous hot natures whose ill-balanced zeal is more fatal to a cause than enmity. No one could on occasion be more oafishly stupid than he, or more rashly brave; and yet the way he kept up a show of intercourse with Major Sirr and my Lord Clare, after the fashion of a safety-rope to which to cling in peril, was worthy of quite a subtle plotter. That the giant meant well there could be no doubt. But if he, Curran, had had aught to do with the society, he would have stipulated that this firebrand should be kept as much as might be in the background.

While he meditated thus the punch-bowl was emptied, and, as he made a move to refill it, the party broke into knots and resumed the topic which engrossed them.

Terence listened to young Robert's views, which, under the auspices of liquor, grew more rosy and more loud.

'I don't mind telling you about it,' the boy was saying, 'for I know that your honour is too fine to allow the smallest hint to be dropped of what I say. The French will come with 15,000 men, and

gunpowder, and muskets. Pikeheads are being hammered out of hours on hundreds of village anvils.'

'They will never send 15,000 men,' Terence objected, with a doggedness induced by drink. 'Their coffers are empty. Holland, Switzerland, the Rhine, claim the attention of their arms.'

'If they send but 5,000 the work can be done. You don't believe it? With three hundred as officers to head our own people, we could make an effort.'

'What can a rabble hope to do against a disciplined force?' exclaimed Terence, with animation. 'The French could not spare three hundred officers to this outlying island. Who have you amongst you who could teach a single military manœuvre? Who could save an army from rout if attacked in rear, or judiciously decide upon a line of entrenchment? What a reckless waste of life—a march into the grave!'

'There are cultivated gentlemen who will come forward when they see that we are in earnest,' put in Cassidy slyly; 'lots of them. There is no telling what mines of military genius may be found amongst the high-born. I confess I'd like to know what we really may expect from France. Theobald has been ten months in Paris, is hand and glove they say with General Hoche, and Carnot, the "Organiser of Victory." Strange he should never write.'

'My cousin Doreen has letters from him,' Terence

said, in thick accents. 'Maybe she'd tell us if we coaxed her.' Then, rising, he flung wide the shutters and opened the window, through which streamed such a flood of morning light and perfumed air as caused his wits to reel. Cassidy grinned as he marked the 'us,' and, encouraged by so good a sign, made bold to clap the young patrician upon the shoulder.

'Sure she'd tell you, councillor darlint,' he whispered; 'for she likes you, and I can get nothing serious out of her. Faix! it's the dainty colleen she is!'

'I dare say she would,' returned Terence, while lines of latent humour puckered up the giant's face. Councillor Crosbie's lofty patronage amused him, for, of the two, Mr. Cassidy had seen most of the Abbey during the past year. 'The day is come,' he urged; 'the very hour for a ride. Will ye go and find out something to make our minds aisy, or do ye think Misthress Doreen would be cross wid ye?'

Cassidy was taking liberties. Of that Terence felt hazily assured.

'Yes,' he replied, 'I will canter over to Strogue to see what I can gather; a gallop by the beach will steady my nerves for the business of the infernal Four-courts. Tell Phil, Cassidy, to saddle the horses at once.'

Cassidy humbly obeyed orders, while Curran, who was watching, laughed, despite his dreary thoughts. How translucent is the strategy of youth! The

squireen's familiar manner of mentioning Doreen had stung her cousin, and filled him with a desire to warn her of the oaf's presumption. It was a fine excuse for stealing a delicious hour with a girl who loved not flirtation; who crumpled up her admirers with scorn; who might, without some such excuse, resent even a cousin's interference with the stern duties of matutinal chicken-feeding.

'Go!' Mr. Curran laughed, his conscience relieved, as he placed his hand on the broad straight back of his favourite. 'Go, lad, and learn what you can from that lovely conspiring siren. I think my Sally must go too, to protect you. Stop a minute while I write a line to my lady. I'm sorry we've not had so gay a time as usual—but sure gaiety is being squeezed quite out of us. One Doughan Dourish before we separate. Here's to Innisfail, and may God have mercy on her! And now good-night, or rather good-morning. I've a heavy day before me, and must e'en steal forty winks.'

The party mounted their horses and rode away, and Mr. Curran went to bed and slept, quite persuaded now that Terence must go home and stop there.



CHAPTER X.

LOVES AND DOVES?



HONEST Phil saddled the horses and brought them round in a twinkling, delighted always with a journey to the Abbey; for did not red-haired Biddy, who held his large heart in keeping, abide at the shebeen foreninst the Little House with her mamma, Jug Coyle? Jug Coyle—the Collough—or wise woman, mistress of hidden arts, whose little public-house, on Madam Gillin's land, had grown more orderly than heretofore during the last few months. It was not that grooms and soldiers frequented it the less, but that, instead of sitting on the bench without, roaring ribald staves into the small hours, as had been the objectionable custom, they now preferred the innermost room with a well-closed door. Yet, roistering or silent, there was the shebeen with its mouldering thatched roof and discoloured whitewash walls, and one of its tiny

windows roughly boarded up, at the very gate of the lordly Abbey—an undiminished eyesore to the chatelaine.

Sara, whose gentle nature was perturbed by the scene at the supper-table—the pale faces and haggard looks—slept not a wink all night, and was most glad to join Terence in a canter by the sea-shore. She daily grew fonder of Doreen, whose quiet manner seemed to instil calmness into her own soul; who allowed the child in a gracious way to cling to her, to prattle of her little troubles, her suspicions and her fears, and her adoration of the undergraduate. Her father was too busy to listen to her babbling; the dear young undergraduate too much absorbed in what he called the cycle of injustice. All those with whom she had to do—except Doreen—were for ever prating of the Saxon's iron heel, shaking their fists at Heaven, venting dark anathemas and muttering such threats as terrified her. Something dreadfully mysterious was to take place soon—of that she felt assured—though when she asked questions, Mr. Curran pinched her chin, calling her a little silly kitten; then mused with eyes averted. Yes, there was a heavy intangible cloud o'ershadowing those she loved; all the little maid could do was to pour out her innocent soul to God, imploring His mercy for her father and her friends.

Wiser eyes than Sara's saw the cloud—observed that it grew blacker and more thunderous as it lowered nearer earth—that its lining, instead of

being silvern, was lurid red. Some, like wreckers on a craggy beach, rejoiced in the approach of a storm which would bring them pelf; others watched it wistfully, as it darkened the sun, with a sickening sense of powerlessness to avert its coming. Among these was Doreen, who, surveying the gloomy prospect as from a watch-tower, grew hourly more grave and self-contained. Her position at the Abbey had changed but little during the interval. The dowager had never directly referred to the conversation in the rosary, but the damsel was not slow in perceiving that Shane and herself were thrown together as often as was practicable. Then this wild scheme was not to be abandoned idly? What could be the reason for it? Once, in her desire to escape from a false position, she begged her easy-going parent to take her to live with him in Dublin, telling him plainly that she could never marry Shane, imploring him to spare her a distressing ordeal. He only patted her hands, however, and nodded perplexedly, with an assurance that she should never be forced into anything she did not like. It was clear that Mr. Wolfe was growing more and more afraid of his sister, also that public affairs distressed him; for he plunged daily more deeply into routine business, attempting in a weak way now and then to pour oil upon the waters between Curran and Clare, carefully keeping his daughter out of the capital as much as he was able. Not but what he would stand up for his girl upon occasion, when my lady was too hard upon her.

The dowager never grew weary of lifting up her voice against Doreen's unseemly proclivities, her free and easy ways, her ridings hither and thither, her expeditions none knew whither. It was a disgrace to the family, she averred—for in her own girlhood Irish ladies were content to sit by the fireside, or look after the pastry, study the art of dumpling-making, concoct cunning gooseberry-wine and raspberry-vinegar, prepare delicious minglings of roseleaves and lavender for the sweetening of the family linen. To all of which Mr. Wolfe was wont to reply mildly :

‘The maiden is of a masculine turn, who delights not in sampler-stitching or pie-baking. She is three-and-twenty, of unusually staid manners. I’d like to see the man who dared insult her ! Let be, let be. None would be more glad than I if she would think less of politics and the dreadful Penal Code. Guide her inexperience gently, if you will ; but do not attempt coercion, or you’ll get the worst of it.’

Despite this prudent counsel, there were several tussles ’twixt the maiden and her aunt ; in one of which the elder dropped some incautious words, which were a revelation to Doreen.

‘You play with edged tools, girl !’ she had said. ‘You form friendships with the enemies of the executive and urge them to deeds of rashness, knowing that, come what may, you, as a woman, will escape scot-free. Your unwarrantable proceedings fill your father with such anxiety that he

dares not have you home, lest in Dublin you should set up for a heroine and disgrace us. You are the most stubborn stiff-necked piece of goods the world ever saw! Yet what can be expected of a Papist? This is Nemesis upon him for having married one.'

Then this was the cause of her being left at the Abbey—of Mr. Wolfe's evident anxiety? He dreaded lest—in her sorrow for her people—she should do something which would involve him in difficulties with Government. Poor, weak, loving father! No. That she clearly had no right to do. Yet she could surely not be expected to approve the acts of the executive; she, a Catholic, whose heart was rendered so sensitive by the iron which had worn into it from childhood. Was it her fault if her mind turned itself towards passing events instead of being absorbed by the manufacture of tarts? Surely not! Hers was a sturdier, braver nature than her father's. Loving him as she did, she strove not to perceive his truckling ways. Had she been a man she would have done as Tone had done—have seized a buckler and girded by her side a sword—to have at the oppressor, whose tricks were so crafty and so base. So both her father and her aunt suspected her, did they, of urging men on to conspire against the state? My lady would doubtless have placed her under lock and key if her brother had permitted of such a measure. And knowing or suspecting what she did, she was still anxious to bring about a union between the young people—her favourite son, the wealthy Earl

of Glandore, and the Papist heiress who was so unmanageable. It was most amazing. Doreen failed to track out the slightest clue to the mystery.

Finding it so knotty she gave it up, choosing rather to ponder on the turn affairs were taking. She hated Lord Clare now with an indignant hatred, for he had raised his mask a little, and she had seen the devil's lineaments looking out from under it. He made no secret of his dislike of the Catholics, telling her to her face one day, with an arrogant hauteur which made her blood tingle, that he was going to make it his especial business to pull down the altars of Baal. Oh, if this Sisera would only lie down to sleep before her—with what satisfaction would she drive a great nail into his temple!

The lord chancellor was aware that the beautiful Miss Wolfe loved him not, and was wont to jest thereat when taking a dish of tea with his old flame the dowager. My lady smiled at his tirades, making merry over the appalling catalogue of things which he intended to do; for, being a brilliant Irishman, he of course had the national tendency to romancing, and it never entered into her mind to conceive that he actually could mean what he said. Though shrewd enough, my lady was quite taken in by my Lord Clare, who seeing in her a swaddler—one of those bigots who mistake rancour for virtue—was minded to make his ancient ally useful to his ends.

He failed to realise that my lady's bigotry was only skin-deep—that it was her way of protesting against the many disagreeable things which she

had been forced to endure, and, thanks to Gillin, was still enduring. He therefore feared not to propose to her a something, at which her pride should have recoiled with horror, but which—thanks to his persuasive arts and her belief in his talent and integrity, she agreed at least to consider before repudiating. First he commiserated her position in being burthened with the responsible care of a damsel who was like to bring disgrace upon them all.

Behind the scenes as he was, he could see farther among the machinery than most people, and deeply deplored what seemed inevitable—namely, that the rash young lady would certainly commit herself with regard to the members of the Secret Society—be drawn into their schemes—and work grave mischief, such as should bring shame on the names both of Wolfe and Crosbie, unless something were done to circumvent her. Violent means were of course vulgar, and dangerous to boot, by reason of Miss Wolfe's character. My lady wished to unite her to her eldest son, did she? Well, it was an odd fancy, at which it was not his place to cavil. All the more reason then to render the folly of the girl of no effect by artifice. Once settled down as a wife and mother, she would forget the errors of her girlhood, and even thank her friends for having saved her from herself.

Now my Lord Clare knew through Mr. Pitt, whose spies in Paris told him everything, that Tone kept up a correspondence with Miss Wolfe under

the name of Smith—that she fetched her letters from Jug Coyle's shebeen, where they were left for her under a prearranged name. His own spies told him that she talked sometimes with mysterious men, who came and went in a suspicious manner, between the environs of Dublin and the outlying districts. Yes, it was too true; my lady might well look shocked. The conspirators were making a catspaw of her niece, who hovered between two duties—the one to her Protestant father, the other to her crushed co-religionists.

Did my lady's eyes ask what was to be done? This, and only this. For it was clear, was it not, that her mines must be countermined for her own sake and that of her belongings? It would not do to seize the letters, because the villain in Paris would then invent some new method of communication, which it might take the spies some time to discover, and time was important just now. The young lady, being enthusiastic and inexperienced, was most shamefully *exploitée*—the executive saw that, and were prepared to make allowances, provided her family would play a little into their hands. Did she see what he meant? No! Then my lady was duller than usual, and he must dot his i's. The executive knew that Miss Wolfe was artfully used as a spreader of secrets, because no one else in all Ireland occupied a position of similar complexity. Her heart was with the malcontents, to begin with. She, as daughter of the attorney-general—most cautious of time-servers—was not likely to be sus-

pected of overt acts of treason. She was clear-headed, too, and resolute, useful in council. Ill-judged in other things, the conspirators had done wisely to employ Miss Wolfe as a means of intercommunication.

It would never do for Mr. Wolfe to be told of his child's transgressions, as he would only whimper and cry out; the stronger hand of his sister therefore must take the tiller, and steer the family through this difficulty. Did my lady see now? No! Well, the spies of the executive were cunning, no doubt; but their eyes could not pierce stone walls or sheets of paper tied tight with ribbon. My Lord Camden and the Privy Council wanted to know what the letters contained which were dropped at the 'Irish Slave' for Miss Doreen. Would my lady undertake the little service of finding out, and then tell her dear friend Lord Clare what plans were suggested, what names mentioned? He, on his side, would of course promise to be prudence personified, and swear never to divulge by what means the information had been obtained.

The countess winced at the suggestion, and her face crimsoned. If Government chose to establish a bureau of paid informers, who were dubbed the Battalion of Testimony, it was no affair of hers, though she could not approve the principle; but as to becoming one herself, the bare idea was an audacious insult. The chancellor laughed airily as she turned on him, for he expected some such ebullition of feeling, and waited a little while ere he

proceeded. Then, like the serpent luring Eve, he strove to decide her with specious arguments. He showed that, by helping to circumvent their plans, she might do signal service against the Catholics; that both her brother and eldest son might be made to benefit indirectly by her acts, and that nobody would know anything of what she had done. In love and war all means are fair. The girl had no excuse for the line she chose to take. It was right and fitting that the lower orders should be cowed; that the Papists should be stamped down into the serfdom from which in their insolence they struggled to escape; that this Tone, whom people had liked till he took up the cudgels of Antichrist, should be brought to punishment.

These were good reasons—strong enough surely to decide my lady. If she wanted another, let her think of Gillin and her ‘Irish Slave.’ It would be strange if that hateful enemy could not be mixed in the coming struggle, and crushed in the downfall of the conspirators. This last stroke almost settled the resolve of the wavering countess, whose mental mirror had been blurred by long dabbling in questionable waters, which, rising in her husband’s throat to choking, had wrung that last cry from him before he died. It would be delightful to discomfit Gillin. It would be odd, too, if Doreen, in the contrition which follows upon being found out, did not throw herself on her aunt’s mercy, and joyfully do as she was told, on condition of being saved. After meditating awhile, my lady said she

would think about it; and Lord Clare, having planted his arrow, rode back to town, satisfied that he had gained his end.

Doreen was not chicken-feeding, as Terence had thought probable, on the morning when the riders started from the Priory. Yet was she up and about, for there is naught so invigorating as fresh sea-air with a whiff of tar in it, and the evenings at the Abbey were dreary enough to induce the most wakeful to take refuge betimes in bed. She tended the flowers in the tiny square called Miss Wolfe's plot, spent a few moments in affectionate communion with some eager wet muzzles and wagging tails in the kennels, then tripped away to the rosary, to study a letter received the night before—a letter signed 'Smith,' in a cramped hand. When such reached her, she invariably retired thither to decipher them; for in the seclusion formed by the high clipped hedges, she was sure of privacy, none being able to wander among the shady avenues of beech without giving notice of their intention by the clang of the golden grille, or the creaking of a lesser gate situated at the other end of the pleasure.

It was a letter which gave food for concern. Impetuous, hot, Keltic; dealing, too, with details which told of action imminent.

'I will have no priests in the business,' it said. 'Most of them are enemies to the French revolution. They will only do mischief. The republic is

on the move ; will give us five thousand men. I would attempt it with one hundred. My own life is of little consequence. Please God, though, the dogs shall not have my poor blood to lick. I am willing to encounter any danger as a soldier, but have a violent objection to being hanged as a traitor, consequently I have claimed a commission in the French army. This to ensure being treated as a soldier in case of the fortune of war throwing me into the hands of England.'

'His life—noble young hero!' Doreen reflected. 'Suppose that he were to lose his life in the coming struggle! If Moiley needed such a sacrifice, better that he should fall fighting than die a dog's death by the noose!'

As she thought what a blow his death would be, her bosom swelled with anxiety ; for every earnest woman sets up an idol in her heart, to be clothed in the trappings of her own belief, which she takes for its native adornments. She sits and keeps pious vigil over it, and weaves ennobling legends concerning it, seeming to become purified by contact with a nobler power, which, after all, is but the reflection of her own better self. That her influence over Theobald was great, Doreen ~~knew~~, but not so great as his was over her. There seemed to her mind, twisted as it was by circumstance into a sombre shape, something sublime even in the light way in which he wrote of gravest things. His letters were schoolboy documents, full of homely jests, quaint

sayings, quotations from bad plays. Yet what a marvellous work was he achieving. A year ago he had gone forth a wanderer, armed with a few pounds and a large stock of hope. He had sailed to New York, narrowly escaping seizure by the crimpers on the sea; had then made for Paris, whither he arrived almost without a penny. He knew scarce a word of French, yet went he straight to Carnot, who, in a satin dressing-gown, was holding *levées* at the Luxembourg. Partly in broken words, much more by signs, he made known his wishes to the Organiser of Victory, and, through him, to the Directory. They saw in his project for an invasion of Ireland a tempting way of harassing perfidious Albion, but unfortunately their treasury was empty, their armies disorganised, and so they gave to their suppliant a cool reception. But Tone was not to be easily put off. He haunted the antechambers of the ministers, learned their language, prepared statements, suggested plans; importuned all and each in broken jargon, till, amazed at his energy, filled with respect for his pure motives and simple life, they gave him a high place amongst their own officers, and promised that his desires should be gratified.

Doreen followed the rapidity of his proceedings with astonished admiration, marvelling that he should work as he worked from sheer love of mankind; was quite persuaded that all he did was right; compared him daily to the men she saw around her—arrogant Clare, swinish Shane, idle,

prosaic Terence—and felt almost prepared sometimes, if need were, to cast in her lot (as the chancellor surmised) with her mother's oppressed people, rather than with those of her highly-connected father. Gusts of loathing swept over her soul for the feudal magnificence of the Abbey; she seemed thrown on a bed of roses whose perfume sickened her. The idea of wedding all this splendour while her people groaned, was in itself revolting; to espouse Shane with it, filled the measure of her horror. Rather than submit to my lady's eccentric wish, she was prepared to run away—to hide herself in Connaught, anywhere; and this being comfortably settled, she went on with Theobald's last letter.

‘Independence at all hazards. If the men of property won't help us, they must fall, and we must support ourselves by the aid of that numerous community, *the men of no property*. Alas for poor Pat! He is fallible; but a lame dog has been helped over a stile before now. The *arme blanche* is the system of the French, and, I believe, for the Irish too. At least I shall recommend it, as Pat, being very savage and furious, takes more naturally to the pike than the musket, and the tactics of every nation should be adapted to its character. As for Dublin, one of two things must happen. Its garrison is at least five thousand strong. If a landing were effected, Government would either retain the garrison for their own security (in which case there would be five thousand men idle on the part of the enemy), or

they would march them to oppose us, and then the people would seize the capital. Any way, we could starve Dublin in a week, without striking a blow.'

'Starve Dublin in a week!' Doreen pondered. 'What would happen to outlying places like the Abbey?' Then an idea struck her, whereby her own annoyances might be considerably lightened. 'Why not,' she thought, 'work on my aunt's prudential fears, and induce her to transfer the establishment to Ennishowen, in the north? Thus may Shane and his mother be removed from danger, whilst I am free of a dilemma—for, of course, when the moment of peril comes, my place will be beside my father.'

The golden grille clanged. A slight female figure, in a blue velvet habit and peaked hat, after the new mode, made its way among the roses, and Doreen advanced to welcome Sara.

Mr. Curran's pet was always a favourite of Miss Wolfe's, to whom her prattle was a rest in the midst of many perplexities. She rallied her archly about the undergraduate, marking, with a grave smile, the confusion in the young maid's face; listening absently to ecstatic descriptions of his numerous perfections, with a tender indulgence mixed with sadness; for it undoubtedly was sad to observe how blindly and artlessly the gay kitten gambolled, in spite of that threatening cloud; wondering, wide-eyed, whether he really and positively ever could come to care a tiny bit for a silly little thing like her.

Doreen knew quite well that Robert Emmett's was a lovable nature, that he was free from the ordinary frailties of youth, sensitive to a fault, just such a visionary as would suffer terribly in a great crisis such as was at hand. Just as Tone was a chivalrous man of action, so the younger Emmett was a dreamer of the most unpractical kind—one who, staring at the stars, and striving to pierce their mysteries, would plunge head-foremost into the first pitfall that was made ready for his feet. His admiration for Theobald was as great as Doreen's. When that cloud should burst, he would surely be found by his side—might possibly stumble where the other could stand erect—and, if aught befell him, what then would happen to the Primrose? But what is the use of courting melancholy? Doreen this morning, as at other times, shook off the dismal effects of her gay friend's castle-building, made efforts to meet her half-way, spoke hopefully of days to come, when Ireland should be content, when Sara should have become a wrinkled matron with a parterre of yellow blossoms round her, and beloved Robert a happy old paterfamilias with a treble chin.

Sara's peachy cheeks broke into dimples of pleasure at the description, as she looked up sideways like a bird.

'You are wasting your holiest affections, my child,' Doreen observed demurely; 'for men are dreadful, dreadful creatures who deceive and ride

away. They don't care about our love one bit, unless we pretend to withhold it.'

'I love him so very much,' returned Sara, with a rapt gaze and trembling accents, 'that I could be content to worship him from a long way off if he would let me—he is so good and kind and noble!'

'He has never spoken to you of love?'

'Never.'

The child's eyes filled with tears, and Doreen's heart tightened for her. Poor fragile blossom. What might the nipping blast have in store for it?

'If any mischance were to befall him——' began the elder girl.

'I should die,' Sara answered simply, as though such a result was the only one which could be possible.

Doreen walked on in silence. She was twenty-three, her companion five years younger. Yet she could not comprehend this innocent pure heart which at eighteen gave itself unconditionally away to be trampled upon or treasured as its recipient should elect. She was sure that she had herself never loved any one, except Tone, and her father, and her mother's memory. The iron of the Penal Code had seared the germ of such a love within her if it ever had existed. She recalled the cold way in which she had calculated her capacity for playing Judith, and felt ashamed. But why should she, after all? The practical and the romantic were

singularly blended in her character. What had a Catholic to do with love and the exchanging of young hearts? Fretfully she turned away from the enchantments of conservatories and hen-houses which she was displaying to her friend, and remarked as she led the way to the kennels:

‘You said you had brought Terence with you. Can he be closeted all this while with his mother? That would be unusual. He does not favour us with much of his society. As I live, here’s another visitor. It is such a lovely morning that I shall lay violent hands upon you all. Mr. Cassidy here is one of the best yachtsmen on the bay. We might go for a sail round Ireland’s Eye if Terence would only condescend to show himself.’

‘Oh yes!’ cried ecstatic Sara, ‘it would be entrancingly delicious.’ She would run and tell my lady, who was probably breakfasting, that she must give us her son for the general good.

It was the jolly giant, who on his big bay hunter clattered into the courtyard; come, probably, in search of news on his own account, in spite of what he had said to Terence a few hours before. He had watered his horse at the shebeen, had taken a plunge into the sea to dissipate the fumes of last night’s revel, had given red-haired Biddy such a smacking kiss as would have roused the ire of Terence’s devoted henchman if he had been within fifty yards, and was now come to pay his respects to the inmates of the Abbey.

He praised the dogs in a flurried sort of way,

stood on one great foot and then the other, rapping the dust from his full-skirted riding-coat with his hunting-crop, whilst his eyes devoured the fine lines of Miss Wolfe's figure, which indeed compelled admiration through its tight-fitting, high-waisted frock. During the last year he had made considerable advance in the good graces of the chatelaine, and of her first-born. She, as chatelaines ought to be, was delighted to have a host of philanderers hanging about the Abbey, swilling its liquor, devouring its beef, while my lord deigned to make the squireen useful in a multitude of ways. Belonging as he did to the half-mounted class, such homage as he could pay was due to a great lord, who was kind enough to smile upon him. That he might be hand and glove with the United Irishmen was neither here nor there; was he not also an ally of Major Sirr's as well as a *protégé* of the chancellor's—tolerated too by Curran, Lord Clare's arch-enemy? He was all things to all men, a typical 'tame cat:' it remained to be seen which side he would take when the crisis should come—at least so people remarked who did not know, as we do, that he had taken the oath and was given to mystical questions anent the placing of a bough in the crown of England. A man who can turn his hand to anything, rides well to hounds, sings jovial ditties, makes genteel play with a rapier, can sigh like a furnace, and look languishingly at a pretty girl, is sure of being a general favourite. Doreen liked Mr. Cassidy as much as Shane did, an unusual

circumstance, for his likes and dislikes were generally in direct opposition to hers. She was wont to jest at his many blunders, lecture him for his stupidity, allow him greater liberties than were usual between an heiress and a 'half-mounted.' For there was no harm in him. He would not be likely to try to run off with this prize, for Shane's sword — champion-spit of the Cherokees and Blasters—was a universally dreaded weapon, and Mr. Cassidy was too fond of the good things of this life to think of suddenly quitting it with daylight through his vitals. Sometimes he made love to her. Then she held out a warning finger while smiles wreathed her ruddy lips, as she would have done to any inmate of the kennels that should dare leap with dirty paws upon her flowered muslin.

This morning his behaviour was not what it should have been. Sure that dip in Dublin Bay had not washed away the impudence begot of claret. She looked so ravishingly fresh and neat in the chip hat which, with a plain white ribbon knotted beneath the chin, gave a yet fuller glow to her rich complexion, the close-clinging robe spangled here and there with a bunch of poppies, that there was little wonder if prudence was for once outrun by passion. She was not Miss Hoyden any more. Her clothes were of the most fashionable cut; nimblest-fingered of Dublin tailoresses made her frock; long mitts of daintiest Carrick lace masked only to accentuate the golden ripeness of her finely modelled arms; a pair of stout pointed

brogues, silver buckled, drew down the eye to the clean ankle and high instep, which told of healthful exercise by a series of suave contours and voluptuous curves.

Now the mind of Cassidy was gross in its essence; jaded too by appetites in riot. What would be more likely to stimulate a coarse illiterate squireen than the aspect of such a living paradox as this? His political intentions were admirable, doubtless; possibly when the time came he, like a few others, would rise to the occasion, cast aside low vices, and, passing like gold through the fire, achieve deeds which would endear him to his countrymen. That was possibly in the future. The present only whispered, as his eyes wandered over the figure of the girl before him, that such a morsel could not be too dearly bought. With unwonted courage, he blurted out the original remark:

‘Mistress Doreen, you’re monsthrous beautiful!’

‘Am I?’ she replied, raising her eyebrows. ‘Alas! it’s of little consequence.’

‘Is it now?’ returned Cassidy, endeavouring in his murky brain to plod out a reason for the statement. ‘Oh!’ he said at length, ‘becase you’re booked, and you don’t care whether my lord is pleased or not.’

‘My lord?’ inquired the girl, her brows arching yet higher.

‘Aren’t you to be the future lady of Ennishowen? I can put two and two together.’

So this hateful match was being freely canvassed. Even muddled Cassidy had penetrated my lady's plans. He was peering straight into her eyes, trying to find what he could at the bottom of their brown depths. The heat of angry humiliation sent the blood bubbling to her face. Cassidy observed it, and leered pleasantly.

'He's not good enough for you—I don't like your marrying him,' he observed with decision.

'No more do I,' returned calm Miss Wolfe.

Cassidy's looks sought the ground—his big hand fondled the muzzles of the dogs. After a long pause, he said in a low voice :

'If you don't care about him it's small blame to you.'

'Neither for him, nor anybody else.' (The slightest contraction of a fine nostril.)

'Don't say that, Miss Doreen, darlint,' said the giant, quickly. 'There's many a stout fellow about, whose heart it would please if ye'd rub your pretty brogues on it, who'd like to set fire to the tobacco in his pipe every blessed day by the light of your lovely eyes.'

Doreen glanced up at the giant with an amused smile.

'Fie! Mr. Cassidy. If I didn't think you too sensible a man, I should believe you were trying to propose to me.' Then it struck her that it was on this very spot that Terence had asked if he might hope.

'What possesses the men? How odd it is,'

she said, thinking aloud. 'Fate settled long since that I was to die an old maid; and everybody seems to want to marry me. Why? I am surely not so irresistible? There are scores of girls who would be delighted to marry any one, but somehow nobody cares to ask them! Why not try Norah Gillin—Shane at least thinks her a paragon—and she has the advantage of being a Protestant.'

'Miss Doreen,' Cassidy whispered, 'if I undertook to work heart and soul for the cause you care so much for; if I made use of my opportunities—went about for you—as your agents do (you see I know all about it); if, when the hour comes, I promised to risk my life and all I have for you—'tisn't much—would you change your mind then?'

Miss Wolfe felt his hot breath upon her hair, and began to feel uncomfortable. It was her own fault. She should have cried 'Down!' to this importunate dog before.

'Mr. Cassidy,' she said, with the quiet dignity which was her best protection, 'you show yourself in a false light. You belong to the society—I fully believe—from conviction of the holiness of its aims. Although a Protestant, you are an Irishman, as I am an Irishwoman. Our wrongs are common. Don't let me suppose you to be suggesting a bargain.'

'It is that good-for-nothing young councillor!' the giant muttered, grinding his teeth fiercely. 'If I was sure of it, I'd run him through! Have a care, young lady; don't trifle with honest men—or wigs will be on the green, and you may be sorry!'

The interview was becoming extremely painful. Cassidy, when tried, was showing the cloven foot, as under-bred persons will. Miss Wolfe drew herself up to her full height, knitted her dark brows, and said coldly :

‘You forget yourself strangely, sir ! My aunt and my cousin have been over-kind to you ; I have tried, for my poor part, to make your visits pleasant, believing you, as I still believe, to be honest, if bearish and uncouth. If you dare to persecute me any further I will speak to my aunt, and the doors of the Abbey will be closed to you for ever. Then seeing how rueful, how dismayed the hapless giant looked, she took compassion and held out a frank little brown hand. ‘Come, come ! This is childish nonsense. I must not be hard on you. We must not quarrel, you know, but cling together closely for the good cause’s sake. If petty private feuds begin to divide us, the enemy will dance for joy. I want a friend in whom to trust. You shall be that friend. Will you ? Come ! Be good, and I will pardon you.’

She placed her hand in his, where it lay like a small leaf, and her companion said sulkily, as he stroked it with a great finger :

‘You evaded the question about Mr. Crosbie.’

‘Well then,’ she answered, ‘I care no more for him than for Shane or you. I will never marry till Erin is righted. Ah me ! doesn’t that look like perpetual maidenhood ? My husband, too, must have won his spurs as a hero, and heroes are scarce.

There. Shake hands, and let there be an end of it. Your heart is in the cause, as mine is. Your acts speak for you, and Theobald shall thank you some day. Depend on it, the best tenure of earthly attachment is tenancy at will. You have the use of the soil, and nothing you plant in it shoots so deeply but it may be removed with ease. Let us be friends—trusty friends, Mr. Cassidy—no more.'

At this juncture, Terence came briskly round the corner, and started to see the attitude of the twain. His sudden suspicion cooled, however, upon perceiving that his cousin was no whit confused. Her hand still remained in that of Cassidy, and she said, laughing, as she swung it to and fro :

'Here is a big creature who threatens by-and-by to bud into a hero of romance. When he kneels victorious in the lists, I, as queen of beauty, am to bestow the laurel crown. What a delectable picture, isn't it? Glad to see you, Terence. You are determined we shall value your society. You give us so very little of it.'

'You look like having quite enough of it by-and-by,' Terence answered moodily. 'I brought with me a note from Mr. Curran to my mother, in which he says that he won't have me at the Priory any more; that I must come home like an obedient child, and wash my face and brush my hair and say I'm sorry. If I had known what was in the letter I should have stayed away.'

'But you'll stop,' Doreen said, so earnestly as to cause the giant to look askance at her. 'It is sad

for members of a family to be at daggers-drawn. Come—to please me—let me be peacemaker. Shane shall say you are welcome, and we'll all be in harmony together again. Promise me—and I'll tell you some rare news that has been burning my tongue this month past. You are both to be trusted, I know.'

'I would every one was as thrue as the councillor here and I!' ejaculated the giant, his frown breaking into sunshine, as if suddenly convinced, by some queer reasoning, that there was nothing between Terence and Miss Wolfe. 'It's mighty careful we'll have to be by-and-by with them rapscallions of ould Sirr's. Wisht! now, and I'll tell ye what he told me,' he pursued, lowering his voice and glancing round as though the dogs could speak. 'There's a place called the Staghouse, over foreninst Kilmainham gaol, bad cess to it, where the Battalion of Testimony are housed and fed, as these hounds are. They have their rations and potteen and a penny or two for toh-baccy—for all the world like gentlemen born. I'll make it my business to stroll in there some day, just to draw their pictures on my mind's eye. Maybe it'll be useful to know the spalpeens' faces.'

'This system of spies is terribly base,' Terence said, sighing. 'Enough to bring down chastisement upon any cause. I don't believe Lord Camden knows of it. The gentry are arming right and left, my mother says, in case the people should be ill-advised enough to rise. Yeomanry corps are being

formed in every county. Shane has been this morning applied to, to take the lead in this district.'

'Shane raise a regiment? With what result?' Doreen inquired quickly.

'With none as yet,' answered Terence, laughing; 'because my lord is sleeping off the effects of a terrible bout last night, which ended in two duels and the killing of a baker, and probably will allow my mother and Lord Clare to settle such a thing as that, as they may deem most wise.'

'It is too late for such organisation to be dangerous,' Doreen affirmed gaily. 'Now I'll tell you the great secret, for it is only fair you, Mr. Cassidy, should know, and Terence will not divulge. Now, lend me your ears. The French fleet is almost ready to sail. Our friends will start in two parties before the summer's over, from a northern port; making the one for Cork, the other for some point on the west coast. Hoche himself has promised to lead the expedition. The delegates of our own provincial centres have secret orders. We may expect to look on the ships which shall bring us deliverance by the commencement of the autumn at the latest. Here's Theobald's last letter; you may read it.'

The giant looked eagerly to seaward, sniffing like a war-horse, as though already he could discern the vessels in the offing; and whistled a subdued whistle, as if saying to himself, 'This is news worth taking that early ride for.' With each great fist deep in a breeches-pocket, he listened to the letter, and then said: '*Arme blanche*. Eh! He agrees with us then,

and is right. The pike's the thing for Paddy. The difficulty of landing powder enough to be of service would be enormous. Moreover, since the Gunpowder Act, Pat knows nothing of its use, and would do more harm to himself in the long-run than to the enemy.'

Doreen declared that of such details she could of course know nothing, to which the giant retorted that there were hosts of reasons in favour of the pike. The Hessian and Hanoverian mercenaries who were being slowly drafted into Ireland were experienced only in the orthodox mode of warfare. The courage of armies is so uncertain that they are often disconcerted and panic-stricken by a style of fighting to which they are unaccustomed.

'See here !' the giant said, drawing a paper from his pocket and presenting it to Terence. 'This is a model by which thousands are being made all over the country. Long, flat, ugly no doubt—but easily forged. Could ye improve on that ?'

Now Terence, had he been wise, would have refused the challenge, sapiently declining to know anything of the model pike, for the giant was bent somehow on securing him—but, intoxicated by the enthusiasm of his pretty cousin, whose cairngorm eyes, under their long lashes, were as usual making sad havoc of his judgment, he took the design and thought he could improve upon it. Cassidy's muddle-headedness stood in the way of his understanding, and the young councillor was forced to sketch out a new design, with elaborate instructions

as to how it might be hammered out with a maximum of wounding power and a minimum of labour. Of course 'it was just the thing,' Cassidy declared, delighted, and brought down his sledge-hammer palm upon the other's shoulder.

'We'll have to crimp you!' he vowed, with a peal of merriment in which Doreen softly joined, 'and so gain a gineral, as the Sassanagh gains sailors. Ye'll be with us some day, Masther Terence, see if you aren't!'

And now, too, he declared that he must have more advice about these said pikes—there was terrible difficulty in storing them as they were made. He had an audacious idea. What did Master Terence think of it? Some of the gentry from the Stag-house were, he was informed, constantly on the prowl in search of such information as might be bartered against good living; for Major Sirr laid it down as an initial axiom, that a member of his battalion who remained silent beyond a certain limit of time was to be cashiered as incompetent. It was literally a case of 'singing for supper,' and one of the simplest methods of obtaining credit with the town-major was to discover and denounce a depot of concealed weapons.

Now Jug Coyle (mistress of the shebeen hard-by)—this was a tremendous secret—was deeply involved in the affairs of the society. Her back garden contained many more pike-heads than praties. It stood to reason that she should be so involved, for was she not a collough, a trafficker in

charms and simples, who was called in by the peasantry around for the curing of their bodily ills; and was it possible for one who was bone of their bone to refrain from meddling with their wrongs also? Well, she could store no more without awaking the suspicions of the Staghousè gentry, who seemed already to suspect that seditious meetings were held under her thatch; and yet it was very necessary that many more weapons should be stored somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. The question was, where could a spot be found for them to lie snugly—a place where folks would least suspect their existence?

The giant was becoming so earnest, and so lucid in his earnestness, that Doreen quite marvelled at him. She knew more of Jug Coyle's *ménage* than he was aware of, and listened with growing interest, for red-polled Biddy, whilst acting as Theobald's post-office, was constantly declaring that she felt like living on a powder-magazine.

'It has been suggested,' the giant went on, 'that Mrs. Gillin of the Little House should take some; but that would not be wise, for she is a Catholic whose opinions are well known, though latterly she has cultivated a discreet tongue. It might enter the head of the town-major to search her place.'

'It would certainly be unwise!' Terence said. 'Remember her daughter's connection with my brother. May she be trusted? There are female

spies as well as male, I suppose. You people are dreadfully rash, Cassidy.'

'Never fear, Master Terence,' returned the giant, with a twinkle in his eye. 'Both she and her daughter are children of the people, who would sacrifice this lord and many another to boot for the good cause, if need were. Her heart is with us, like many another; but in this case at least it's best she should play blind.'

'But what is your suggestion?' Doreen inquired, for the giant was beating about the bush in an exasperating manner.

'This is it. Don't cry out now when ye hear it.' He glanced round with caution, and lowered his voice. 'The ould armoury above in the young men's wing there.'

'What! Here at the Abbey!' Terence exclaimed. 'You are mad.'

Cassidy was watching him in sidelong fashion as he felt his way.

'Sure there's a power of blackguard knives there already, which no one touches from year's end to year's end, as the cobwebs show. I'd stake my life ye've not been in there yourself this year or two. Nobody would search there, would they? They might be passed up from the shebeen at night-time—Biddy and your man Phil would see to it—over the old ivy wall, and exchange a kiss or two into the bargain.'

'Phil is not affiliated,' objected Terence.

'Is he not?' grunted the giant, shortly. 'It's

surprised I'd be if he could not tell us as much about a green bough in England's crown as is known to you or I.'

Doreen's eyes were on her cousin. Her face wore its usual serene look. The enormity of the proceeding did not seem so great to her as it did to him. He did not take into consideration the sublime manner in which women look straight to a goal, without marking the mud which may have to be crossed to reach it. A thought shot through his brain, flooding it with joy. If she could contemplate such a trick being played upon the earl, she could not care about him. That was a rare thing to know. And why should it not be played on him? The brothers were so estranged, that the younger one felt no call to interfere in such a matter on behalf of the elder. It was impossible that he should have lived so long on terms of familiarity with the disaffected without being unconsciously tainted to at least a small extent with their oft-repeated complaints. Not that he was prepared to admit that these modern grievances were well-founded. No doubt it had been very improper—all those years ago—for a Protestant invader to seize, *vi et armis*, the territory of a Catholic nation—to eject the sons of the soil by force, in favour of themselves and their heirs. But really it was too late now to remedy that misfortune.

The English were to all seeming a happy and contented people, who had long since given up groaning over the Norman invasion and the free-

booting proceedings of William the Conqueror. It was merely a matter of time. Ireland must accept the past, and pick out the thorns from the bed on which she lay as well as she could. Thus was Terence, in his idle good-humoured way, accustomed to argue when his personal friends gnashed their teeth at the Sassanagh. But these new theories that were beginning to be broached—even by Mr. Curran himself—charging the executive with motives which, if they in truth existed, were *lèse-patrie* of the most heinous kind, caused even his careless junior to pause and think. And then he consoled himself with considering that high-principled King George could not be Blunderbore—that my Lord Clare was not a Feefofum. Yet there was no doubt that my Lord Clare was unduly harsh—that the low-bred squireens were apt to treat the common folk cruelly to curry favour with the Castle. He did not pause to ask himself why cruelty to common folk should be pleasing in the Castle's eye. These yeomanry corps were likely to be productive of much evil. Terence had said as much to his mother but now. It was possible that Shane, in his overbearing pride of birth and fierce tendency to fire-eating, might become a terrible flail if he accepted the task of organising a regiment—indeed from his nature he was sure to do so. It would be a whimsical revenge for the people that he should be unconsciously guarding their weapons for them.

Councillor Crosbie laughed loud at the conceit, declaring that he saw no reason why pikeheads

should not be added to the 'blackguard knives' in the armoury, and his cousin gave him such a distracting look of thanks that he chid himself for considering the matter at all; while Cassidy, who also caught the look, glared out to seaward, clenching his fists in his deep pockets.

'That eccentric person, Mrs. Gillin!' Terence cried gaily. 'So she's mixed up with all this plotting, is she? Has she taken the oath, or is she but a privileged outsider like myself? And my man Phil, too—that's to please red-polled Biddy, doubtless. Let's take the oath, Doreen, while we can make a favour of it, for all Ireland will, it seems, be in it soon. The good lady was in her garden as I passed this morning, strutting about with leather gloves and garden-shears, and bowed solemnly to me as I passed. What a queer woman! At the Rotunda the other day she came and stood before me, though we have never been introduced, and said, "Are you sure, young man, that you left your home of your free will?" When I said "Certainly," she gave a satisfied nod and disappeared in the crowd. If her daughter is pining for Shane, her mother evidently sets her cap at me. I trust you will all be civil to the future Madam Crosbie. This is the way she walks——' and the irreverent scapegrace proceeded to waddle up and down with so exact an imitation of Mrs. Gillin's peculiarities that Cassidy fairly shouted. That lady and her doings being a tabooed subject at the Abbey, there was special delight in talking of her on the sly.

All three were guiltily startled by the opening of my lady's bedroom window (which looked upon the courtyard), and the apparition of Queen Bess in a bad temper, summoning Miss Wolfe to her presence.



CHAPTER XI.

STORMY WEATHER.



Y lady was walking up and down the tapestry-saloon with hands clasped behind her back, when her niece joined her—a prey evidently to considerable agitation. Doreen marked the deepened wrinkles on her forehead, the tightening of the thin lips, the contraction of the nostrils, and waited with accustomed self-possession to hear her elder's pleasure. The countess was displeased about something. Her fine face was pale, her eyes tinged with red. Her majestic draperies seemed to whisper in their soft rustle that something was seriously disturbing the spirit of the chatelaine. Wheeling round presently, she faced her niece, and, scrutinising her narrowly, spoke.

‘Terence has come home to live,’ she remarked. ‘Mr. Curran cannot bear him any more, and I am not surprised. We must put up with him; he’s enough to vex a saint!’

Doreen's cheek flushed with swift anger at his mother's unwarrantable speech.

'Oh, aunt!' she said, 'dare you speak thus of your own child!'

'Ah!' ejaculated the countess, still frowning at Miss Wolfe, 'let us understand each other at once. I will never allow of any nonsense between you and that boy—do you hear?—NEVER. I presume that he would not dare to marry without my consent. *You* are capable of anything, I know. I sincerely believe that he, as yet, is one shade less undutiful. He has been showing much independence lately, though. There's no knowing,' she went on in a low absent manner, 'what he might not do if he knew——'

'Knew what?' asked Doreen.

My lady started and pushed her fingers through her white hair. 'Nothing, nothing! Mind this—I will never give my consent to a union between you and my second son. Understand this, once and for all.'

'You need not distress yourself, aunt,' Doreen replied.

'Doreen!' my lady said abruptly, after a pause, 'you were talking about *that woman* at the kennel gate just now. I could see you were, by Terence's mimicry. What was it about?'

This was the real cause of her aunt's ill-humour: the red rag, Mrs. Gillin. That foolish idea about Terence was of course only a cloak to conceal unreasonable wrath. It was quite too tyrannical of her, though. They were speaking no ill of their neighbour.

‘We were talking of Norah and Shane,’ the girl replied, with a touch of hauteur. ‘Nothing wonderful in that, for all the world talks about them. I suppose I may be bridesmaid, aunt?’

To her surprise the blood faded slowly from my lady’s face, leaving her lips white, while her breast heaved and her fingers tightened. The girl regretted her pert remark, though her aunt speedily recovered herself.

‘You could stop this disgrace if you would,’ she said in husky tones. ‘Last year I thought that you encouraged Shane; then you turned round again. For shame! That Arthur Wolfe’s daughter should be a flirt! But it’s the other blood that’s working in you. Your father was always too weak and too indulgent. You are a sly, artful girl! Yes, it is right that you should hear the truth. You do no credit to your bringing-up. Is it maidenly to receive letters from a man in secret—to retire, as I have ofttimes seen you do, to a secluded spot in the rosary, there to gloat over them—and that man married, and an outlaw! Fie upon you! Your father is not aware of this, or it would break his heart; for, God help him! he loves you beyond your deserts. But there, there! I will not waste my breath in railing; for what else could be expected of your blood and your religion?’

Doreen’s cheek, too, had paled. She trembled violently, and was forced to cling to a table ere she could still her anger sufficiently to answer. At

length she mastered her voice, which rang out low but clear.

‘Lady Glandore,’ she said, with flashing eyes, ‘it ill becomes one of your years to say cruel things to one of mine, for if you crush out my respect for you as a woman, I choose to remember your white hairs. However bitter you may allow your tongue to be, I will not lower myself to a retort; but let me beg you to remember that some things spoken intemperately will rankle in the heart for ever. No after-apologies will quite wash them out.’

Oh, naughty damsel, to prate of white hair, and suggest that my lady was an octogenarian! She was no more than five-and-fifty, as her niece knew right well—but, bless my heart! we must not survey feminine weapons too closely.

‘I am a disgrace to my bringing-up!’ pursued Doreen, warming to the fray. ‘Yet she who brought me up condescends to act the spy on me! A flirt, am I? I never, upon my honour, gave the least encouragement to either of your sons. They are not such Admirable Crichtons! Seeing that you are beset by some hallucination on this subject, I have again and again implored my father to take me hence in vain. I hereby swear to you by the Holy Mother and my hopes of salvation, that I will never be Shane’s wife—never, never, never! Perhaps now you will leave me at peace. Though I am a Catholic, madam, I decline to brook insult. Here are my cards—face upwards on the table. Show me yours.’

The girl, who was usually so quiet and grave, had lashed her wrath to foam, and was grievously exercised to restrain fast-gathering tears. She would rather have died, however, than have lowered her standard to my lady. With a violent effort, then, she kept them back, and faced the chatelaine with a front as proud as hers.

This was all very shocking: the ill-mannered allusion to hoary locks, the rash oath never to marry Shane, the truculent bearing. Mild Arthur's counsel was wise. My lady generally got the worst of it in conflicts with this girl. It would have been best to have vented her ill-humour upon Terence: who was forbearing towards his mother. But then her victories over him were too easily gained to be worth anything, for he was good-tempered, and respected his mother greatly; and besides, every well-ordered man will always gladly resign to a female antagonist the glory of winning a battle of words.

My lady stalked in silence up and down, retiring behind the entrenchments of her outraged dignity. But Doreen perceived that to make her triumph good she must dare another *sortie*, and disarm her antagonist; so, after a pause for breath, she repeated:

'I have shown you my cards, Lady Glandore—show me yours. You are bent upon my marrying Shane—the compliment is great—far greater than my poor worth deserves. Though you constantly fling insults at me about my manners, my blood,

and my religion, yet you are willing—nay, anxious—condoning these crimes, to accept me as a daughter! Why? The lady of the Little House, who is good and charitable, if innocently vulgar, is a standing bugbear to you. Why? Yet, by a singular contradiction, you allow your paragon to make himself at home with her, and make much of her child, who, to be sure, is a Protestant, but low-born. She is penniless—I am an heiress: hence, of the two, I should be the better prize for him. I see that; but what, in Heaven's name! is to prevent his sallying forth in Dublin, and finding there a fitting partner? Sure there's not a noble Protestant family in Ireland that wouldn't jump at him! A drunkard, no doubt, and a fire-eater—which some folks are rude enough to translate murderer—what of that? It is the custom of his cloth. A coronet well filled with gold covers a multitude of sins! No doubt Mrs. Gillin would dearly like such a son-in-law—it's the way of the world, and I do not blame her—but you, I know, would not care for such a daughter as Norah. Are you not afraid that some fine morning holy Church will join them, and that you will come down to breakfast to find them in an edifying position on their knees, claiming mamma's blessing?'

My lady had sunk into a chair, her pale face paler.

'No, no,' she murmured; 'that could not be. He toys with a pretty wench as a young spark will. Why would I gladly have him marry you? Be-

cause I know he has faults—the faults of youth, which time will remedy—and I feel, dear Doreen, that your strong common-sense will be a stay to his weakness. Once united to you, he will change, and you will be very happy together.’

There was something so pitiable in this abject discomfiture—in this refusal to be insulted—that Miss Wolfe’s resolution failed her. Yet her curiosity was too thoroughly roused to permit of dropping the subject.

‘Then I’m to be the scapegoat?’ she said, with a tinge of scorn. ‘I’m to lick the whelp into shape—no matter if my heart is broken in the process. Thank you! A vow once sworn need never be repeated. Yet do not forget, aunt, if you please, that it is registered. He refuses to go into high-born society where noble ladies are, preferring play and duelling-clubs, and you dread his making a *mésalliance*, rather than which you would accept poor me as a *pis-aller*.’ (Here the young lady made a curtsey.) ‘Many thanks. Is this at all like the truth? Pardon my speaking plainly. It’s best to be aboveboard. After this time we will, with your good leave, never return to the hateful subject. That I shall not be poor can surely claim no part in your calculations, for he is thirty times wealthier than I can ever be. Rich!’ she repeated, with a harsh laugh. ‘A rich Catholic will be a curiosity, *n’est-ce pas?* If this is at all your course of thought, why not prevent his going to the Little House? Speak to Mrs. Gillin as harshly as you began to

speak to me to-day, and there will surely be an end of the matter. Or,' pursued the crafty maiden, remembering Tone's last epistle, 'brush Norah from his mind by change of scene. Why not remove for a few months to Ennishowen? It is long since you were there. Your presence would do much to keep disloyal tenants quiet in these disloyal times. Would not that be a capital example? The boys used to love Ennishowen. Shane will forget the objectionable Norah whilst pursuing the shy seal or shooting wild birds round Malin Head. Do you remember the delirious delight of him and Terence when they dragged their first seal into the boat under Glas-aitch-é Cliff, and how you told me not to be afraid of looking over the garden parapet into the green water dashing so far below? Ah, those were days!' the girl pursued, kindling. 'Our only care whether the fish would bite or the shot carry——' then she was stopped by a lump rising in her throat, stirred by the thought of how different those days were from these, when the thunderous cloud was drawing lower, lower—and she—a reserved young lady—was becoming alarmingly familiarised with secret despatches; a political phantasmagoria; a threatened collision between two classes, whose hate was bubbling over.

The rebellious tears well-nigh burst their bonds; but a strong will was throned within that shapely head. My lady turned angrily upon her niece; for though discomfited and prepared to run up a flag of truce, it was not to be expected that she should

endure this last speech without resenting it. Miss Wolfe's pertness harrowed her proud soul. She had pretended to look on her aunt as in her dotage—a toothless harridan, with no distinguishing attribute except white hair, and had presumed to charge her with ridiculous motives; had torn the dazzling glamour of his rank from Shane, exposing to view a skin as shaggy as the ass's; even going so far as to stigmatise him to his doting mother as a drunkard and a murderer; and, to cap all, had wound up with patronising advice. An ordinary lady of middle age would resent such treatment; how much more then the stern Countess of Glandore, whose nature was toughened by contact with the fire, who was always regarded with awe-stricken terror when she deigned to honour any of the Castle festivities, and who was quite a terrifying personage even to the wives and daughters of contemporary grandees.

Would the stubborn girl be true to her hasty vow? My lady feared she would, though for the moment she was too angry to consider calmly of it. Fierce wrath darted from under her squared brows; her high nose grew thinner; a network of small meshes twitched about her mouth; her long fingers tightly clutched the gold snuffbox which usually lay within them. Yet Miss Wolfe, having recovered her self-possession, looked sombrely at the frost-crowned volcano without a tremor.

‘Doreen,’ my lady said, ‘if your father knew of you what I know, it would kill him; but I elect to

hold my tongue, because I love my brother more than you your father. That you should be insolent to me is what I might expect; so I bear that with equanimity. Thank you for showing me how wrong I was in forming a Utopian scheme for joining my brother's child to Shane. We will say no more about that.' (Doreen heaved a sigh of relief.) 'The indelicacy of your proceedings has shown me that such a thing would be an insult to our name. What! a girl who corresponds clandestinely with a married man; who gallops like a trull about the country, regardless, not only of her own fair fame, but of her family's; who is on terms of familiar-intercourse with a parcel of scatter-brained youths who make the capital of notoriety out of the jingle of sedition. Is this a girl to be received in respectable society? You spoke plainly; so do I. If I were to publish what I chance to know of you, no decent family would receive you within their doors. But I must bear with you for many reasons; your base mother's blood among the rest. You must be the skeleton in our cupboard. All I beg is, that you will rattle your bones less publicly.'

Doreen's dark skin was mottled with pallor; her breath laboured; her lips formed words, yet no sound issued thence. At last she panted out:

'Aunt! you do not believe this of me! You must know me better!'

Then she stopped, perceiving Miss Curran's startled visage in the doorway, which my lady could not, having her back turned to it.

‘Believe it? Yes, I do,’ cried the exasperated countess; ‘I believe that you——’

‘No! Hold your tongue! If you have no respect for yourself or me, have some for Sara!’ Doreen exclaimed, as she hurried to the door.

My lady was filled with remorse, and bit her lips. Her temper had got the better of her prudence; and regret followed swiftly upon angry words.

‘Doreen!’ she cried, in a sudden desire to make good in some sort the mischief which was done; ‘Doreen, at least be careful with your correspondence; see that no one intercepts it; that no one tampers with your letters!’

‘My letters are my own,’ Doreen retorted over her shoulder, haughtily. ‘Don’t you ever dare to touch them.’ Then passing her arm round the waist of trembling Sara, she led her away to enjoy a delightful duet of tears in private.

My lady remained for a long while looking straight before her, bewailing much the unexpected turn which things had taken. It was unwise, considering what lay at the bottom of her heart, to have goaded the damsel as she had done. A high mettled steed resents the curb. Now all that had been said about clandestine correspondence, and so on, was strictly true; was only what it behoved a judicious relative to place in its true light before an impulsive girl, who might come to find her reputation gone before she was aware there was a stain on it. Yet her heart smote the countess when she marked the look of horrified dismay which dawned

in her niece's face during the last harangue. It is an ill thing to corrupt a mind which is innocent. Unhappily this is a wicked world, in which it is necessary for us to note certain sinful details for our own safety's sake. Yet it is not a pleasing job to impart such intelligence for the first time, especially when ill-temper bids us make the worst of it. Lady Glandore knew perfectly well that there could be nothing in the letters from the married man, except treason; and that she had done wrong in suggesting something else. Doreen, she thought, was not a girl to break off the correspondence in consequence of this new light. Indignant, strong in the purity of her motives, she would only hate her aunt and cling the more persistently to the married man and all the other scatter-brained young persons, and plunge more deeply into danger, through bravado.

As she meditated, examining each thrust that had been made on either side, she regretted bitterly her foolish speeches; and then her heart grew sick within her as she came upon a barb, which, flung without aim, hung from a smarting wound. As the maiden had suggested, what should prevent reckless Shane from marching off to church some day with pretty Norah, and returning to crave a blessing? The very thought of such a fatal proceeding caused my lady to rise from her seat with a bound, and wring her hands in anguish.

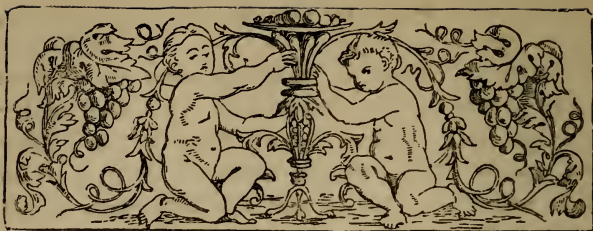
‘What have I done—what have I done?’ she groaned, ‘that an earthly purgatory should be my lot? Did I fail in my duty to my lord? Was I

not too indulgent a wife, screening his unfaithfulness, enduring insult without end from that dreadful woman ?'

Then she reflected how his death had not brought peace to her ; how relentless Time had administered secret scourgings, whilst she appeared to be sitting—a noble, envied widow—between two growing sons. Was her torment to go on increasing, instead of wearing itself out with its own rigour ? What would be the end ? That early sin which took place so long ago—could any one declare that she was aught but an unwilling agent in it ? Might the trace of it never be washed clean ? Was suicide the only means of escape from an agony to which on earth there seemed no term ? If, driven by despair, she were to hurry unbidden into the presence of her Maker, might she not hope to be forgiven ? If your cross is too heavy for your strength, sure you may be pardoned for casting it aside !

As she writhed, a prey to phantoms of retrospect, she felt that her sin was not a faded one of long ago ; that it continued still, and that while she permitted it to roll on unchecked, numbers at compound interest were being chalked to her account. That dreadful secret which had blanched her hair ! Years had woven such confusing complications round it, that were she, taking her courage in both hands, to speak out now, it would be only to transfer a burthen, not destroy it. No, no ! Ten times no ! The time for setting right the wrong was past—past, irre-

trievably. Instead of moaning over it, it were better to concentrate all attention upon this matter of Shane and Norah. At all hazards, the billing and cooing of that couple must be stopped while there was time. Shane was the late earl's eldest son, and Mrs. Gillin——! And Norah was sixteen years old, bred a Protestant by my lord's special desire. Could his wife be misled in her suspicions? The conduct of Mrs. Gillin in the matter was most amazing. My lady surveyed it from all points of view. Truly she was racked by many torments. Até was at work. The orders of the dread goddess were being carried out by the Eumenides.



CHAPTER XII.

A MOTHER'S WILES.



HAVING indulged in a soothing torrent of tears, Doreen departed with lightened heart with the other young people for an excursion on the bay. She felt all the better for the passage of arms, for her breezy common-sense told her that my lady's charges resulted from momentary pique, and had no foundation in conviction. But, resulting from the quarrel, a vista had risen in her mind for the first time of what she might be sacrificing for her people's sake. Evil tongues will wag. Women who brave public opinion have always gone to the wall, time out of mind. No. Not always. Scandal had nothing to say against the maid of Domrémy; Judith's fair fame was smirched in nowise by that little supper *en tête-à-tête* with Holofernes. Miss Wolfe failed to consider that the rapid action of that Jewish tragedy, with its pitiless termination in the murder

of a helpless sleeper, did much to keep the tongue of scandal quiet. Had she held clandestine interviews with the doughty general, walked with him by moonlight and so forth, it is highly probable that all the geese in Jewry would have cackled, and that the heroine would have been tabooed for a brazen slut. Now the young lady whose peculiar position interests us so much at present, while perfectly innocent of wrong-doing, could not but see that her motives might possibly be misinterpreted; that spiteful remarks, similar to her aunt's, would probably go the round of Dublin. Was she prepared to endure opprobrium? was the game worth the candle she was burning for it? was the good she was likely to achieve at all in proportion to the social ruin which would fall upon herself? Like the generous young person that she was, her first romantic feeling was an exultant glow at the distant prospect of martyrdom; her second—due to the practical firmness of her character—a doubt whether she might not be self-deceived by inexperience. Then her father too—the good weak father who cared very much for sublunary fleshpots—what would he say when he came to know how deeply circumstances were involving his child in matters which he would surely disapprove? She could not help the stirring of an idea (which she strove hard to lull to rest) to the effect that it is not very heroic to drag innocent people into a mess; and a second one moved at the stirring of the first, which whispered that if her own name were to be

publicly bandied, her father would certainly get into trouble for not keeping her in check. Her aunt's was the wisdom of the world; there was no doubt about it.

It is all very well to sacrifice yourself, vow that you will never marry, that no woodbine-bonds of family affection shall be permitted to spring up around you—provided that you stand quite alone. If you have a parent who delights in fleshpots, who holds an honourable situation of which your own heroics may deprive him, it is surely a matter of doubt whether your better part would not be the dusting of household furniture, the warming of slippers, the mending of old stockings, instead of the more picturesque operation of donning plume and helm. What, I wonder, did the parents of Joan of Arc think of their daughter when she abandoned the care of sheep to go a-soldiering? Doreen recognised the objections to her proposed course with a pang, but wavered, searching for an excuse such as should render her desires commendable. She would have liked to go down to posterity as a female Moses. The position of the budding lawgiver at Pharaoh's court was somewhat like her own, save in the important point that he had no father who loved fleshpots. If it might only be permitted for Arthur Wolfe's daughter to wean him from them to better things! But that seemed too good a prospect to be hoped for, so with a sigh she put it from her.

As, after the recent skirmish, she reviewed the

situation, I grieve to relate she was not sorry for her pertness. My lady had no business to say what she had said, to make rude speeches, and to worry about Shane. The young lady conceived herself bound to speak up boldly in self-defence, to put my lady down on the subject of private liberty, as she often did in the matter of King William. The two ladies started in all things from two opposite poles. That they should clash was inevitable. But she did promise herself to be more prudent in the future for her father's sake; to do what was feasible for the good cause in private, strictly remaining in the background herself, come what might. And this resolution being firmly graven on her mind, she busied herself about fishing-tackle with the placid calm which passed with her for cheerfulness.

Meanwhile my lady sat alone in the tapestry-saloon among the faded effigies of departed Crosbies, looking appealingly at them as though they could help her in an extremity. The guiding spring of her life had been pride, which became firmly grafted by marriage in the glory of her husband's lineage. Pride it was which had supported her fainting heart in many a bitter struggle. Black care had thinned her cheek, had pressed crow's-feet about her restless eyes; yet, save for a querulous manner and the peculiar sudden dilation of the pupil which struck us when first we were introduced to the stately countess in '83, there was but little that was unusual on the surface to tell a new acquaintance that the battle which she fought was never-ceasing.

In the late lord's lifetime she was wretched enough—but with a numbing dulness which is its own anodyne. Moreover, as we discovered on his deathbed, the important secret, if important it were, had been shared between the two. A secret known to even one other person, whose feelings in the matter are similar to our own, is lightened by more than half its weight. He died. His widow was condemned to drag the chain alone—worse than alone, for yet one other person knew of it whose feelings were remote from friendly. The late lord's devil-may-care visage glanced sideways down with an eternal smirk from its frame upon the wall. He was dead. His breast was unburthened. He slept in peace, and there was his smiling counterfeit grinning at his unhappy partner. Did he sleep in peace? Oh! If she could have been sure of that! But no. Possibly he was enduring torments even worse than hers. As he lay choking between the confines of two worlds, perchance he had been allowed to see what was still concealed from her human ken—and then had cried out the warning—‘Set right that wrong while you have the opportunity.’ How horribly unjust seemed the retribution which pursued her! Her sin had been the negative one of living a long lie. If she had had courage to confess—to abase her stiff-necked pride—the wrong might have been set right with but little serious injury to any but herself. But my lord—the prime sinner—had encouraged this pride, declaring that there was no call for a great sacrifice—until the last

moment when his eyes were opened, and he called out in his agony, 'Beware!' By that time the pride so long nurtured was become a second nature.

She could not all of a sudden break through the ramparts of long usage. It was very well for him to cry 'Stand on the pillory,' when he was himself flitting beyond the reach of stone-throwing. It was very well for his odious concubine to cry 'Confess!' who would be no sufferer by the confession. By that improvised death-couch the widow had turned the matter over in all its phases. Then she had not perceived that, with every rising sun, the confession would become more difficult—that (despite the lying proverb) the rolling stone would gather moss till it should move slowly and more slowly, pressing her breath out by degrees ere it ground her to powder under its weight.

Sometimes she tried to forget, and almost fancied that she succeeded, almost believed that her conscience was quite hardened. Then something would take place—a trivial circumstance—one of Doreen's idle shafts, which set her nerves jarring, and the painful truth forced itself upon her that there are tender spots on the most seared of consciences. She had wild accesses of rage within the secrecy of her own chamber, in that my lord who simpered on the wall should have wrecked her life so utterly. She took refuge in religion, loathing the faith of the surviving participator in her secret as an outlet for surging hate and bitterness. She tried to take refuge from her own trouble by smoothing that of

others, but even in this—the last resource of those who see life through jaundiced spectacles—she found little consolation, for the trouble which she soothed was at least open and laid bare. And so the distinct working of a double consciousness—one for good and one for evil at the same time—(which we all feel within us) became unusually evident in Lady Glandore, urging her at one moment to a rash act for which she was gnawed by deep remorse the next. May this account for the growing dislike which she nourished for her second son, while she fed the poor with soup and wrapped their limbs in flannel? Perhaps it was the singular contradictions of her character which induced Lord Clare to like and to respect her so much, and which permitted him at the same time to make that disgraceful suggestion without fear of exclusion from the Abbey, anent Tone's letter.

For the thousandth time, as she twisted in the great chair, my lady wondered whether it was really too late to humble herself, to grovel in the dust, and make confession. There was an obstacle which rendered a tardy repentance impossible, at least until it was removed. That long-cherished match between Shane and Doreen must be accomplished first; then, perhaps—but surely it could not be so absolutely urgent! Time, so far, had brought with him only a complication of troubles, more tangled than his usual fardel. Where was his all-comforting finger, about which the poets have raved? Sure he would relent, and spare the countess the supreme

sacrifice. Not that so far he showed much sign of relenting. This idea of Doreen's about a secret marriage, which had sent the blood tearing back to her aunt's heart, was an extra knot in the web that was smothering her. Norah must be put away; Shane must be seriously exhorted to observe his cousin's charms. Of course she would never marry Terence; nobody wished her to do so. This my lady decided comfortably, on the principle that we easily believe that which we desire. How could Arthur Wolfe be bolstered into showing greater strength of character, and induced to obey his sister? If she were to tell him what she knew of Doreen, to impress on him by this means that a speedy marriage was necessary for her.—No! That would not do. He would be capable of carrying her off in a fright to London, Paris, Rome—anywhere out of temptation's reach.

Then, again, the dowager reflected on the chances of who Norah's father was; and again her agony ascended to a paroxysm. At all hazards so awful a shadow as this hideous new one that loomed must be exorcised. How? Mrs. Gillin was brutish and pitiless, of course. Why did she encourage this terrible flirtation? She could not realise, surely, the sharpness of the tools with which she played. Come what might of it, it was plainly her duty, for everybody's sake (so the chatelaine pondered), to take Madam Gillin to task as to her present conduct.

It is all very well to stick pins in your rival's seat (so she must explain to her), but it is your distinct

interest to be quite certain that you yourself may not be called upon to sit on them. Gillin's spite against my lady was doubtless great. She would do much to injure her, but not to the extent of ruining her own daughter, surely? For, somehow or other—probably on the principle that life not being hard enough, we must practise self-torture—my lady had quite made up her mind as to Norah's parentage. Now Gillin must be bidden forthwith to stop this scandal—and my lady was the one person who could venture to broach the subject. Then qualms of pride arose within the latter's breast. The twain had never spoken but once—on the dreadful evening at Daly's club-house. At Castle-balls they had looked with Medusan gaze right through each other; for the compact was there—no less binding that it was unwritten—that the mistress and the wife should never speak, save on the subject of that secret. Had things not gone crooked, nothing could have been more satisfactory than such a compact. As things were, was not Mrs. Gillin—inflamed to vulgar wrath through her sinful designs being exposed—certain to set her foul tongue clacking, to delve into old sores whose cicatrices were yet soft, to plunge into long-buried matters within hearing, perhaps, of other vulgar wretches, who, in surprised horror, would blab to all the world. Thus did my lady attempt to gloss over her own dread, to veneer the promptings of her pride with plausible reasons for avoiding that which conscience—speaking through unconscious Doreen

—had specially declared must be done without delay.

But it was more than a merely human woman might be called upon to do. In my lord's time people, more sensitive than the herd, marvelled that the countess could bear the insulting presence of her flaunting rival with such stoical equanimity. That much she had bravely borne. But of her own free will to descend from a pedestal occupied with dignity during half a lifetime; to lower herself to an interview with the concubine, who would surely jump upon the rival, voluntarily abased, was more, much more, than might be demanded of a mortal. It was not possible to call upon Mrs. Gillin. The only remaining plan was to take Shane away; to follow Doreen's counsel, and move the household to Ennishowen.

At this point in her self-communing, the limbs of the countess shook with palsy, and her haggard face looked really aged. Since the commencement of her married life, she had carefully eschewed Glas-aitché, the wild islet on Lough Swilly, where the decayed castle of Ennishowen stood, and where *that* had taken place which was the beginning of her troubles. It would be dreadful to have to revisit that spot; yet to that sacrifice at least she was able to resign herself, hoping that it might be counted as half a penance. But Shane, would he consent to be carried thither? to forego the society of Norah, the allurements of Dublin taverns? And if he did in this much obey his mother, could the match with

his cousin be in anywise promoted? My lady's brain grew weary and bewildered as she tried to fit into harmony the pieces of her puzzle.

There was beloved Shane, galloping in, unkempt, from last night's debauch. So soon as he had had time to bathe and dress himself, his mother resolved to summon the dear prodigal to her presence-chamber, and try what her influence could accomplish.

When her favourite son appeared before her, with two pointers gambolling about him, the countess's stern face softened; and well it might, for he was a comely spectacle. Rather low in stature, but elegantly made, with hair brushed backwards and fastened by a diamond clasp, he looked, with his delicate wan face, and eyes rendered the more lustrous for the dark circles round them, a fit guardian of the honour of Glandore. His air and manner when in his mother's presence (as, indeed, in that of Doll Tearsheet, or any other woman) assumed an exquisite blandness, such as gave a false first impression of effeminacy, which was corroborated by the tiny dimensions of his hand. But are not first impressions snares, my brethren, for the deceiving of the unwary? That gazelle-like eye could, on occasion, shoot forth a light of cold ferocity; that finely-modelled little forefinger had many a time sent a hapless boon companion to his last account for an idle jest, with a cool precision and non-chalance which compelled an unwilling sort of admiration, despite its ruffianism. But this morning

he was in the best of humours, as Eblana and Aileach danced about him, wagging their tails and tumbling over and over, in their delight at his friendly notice; for his head did not burn, neither was his tongue parched, and he registered a mental resolution to send a yacht forthwith to Douglas for another hogshead or two of that especially pure claret.

Drawing around him the ample folds of his morning-gown (that becoming one of rose-coloured brocade, thickly frogged and tasselled in gold), he kissed his mother lightly, and played with the jewelled watch-chains which dangled from either fob. As her eyes wandered over his neat limbs, which looked their best in tight blue-striped pantaloons that ended midway down the calf in a great bunch of ribbons, her spirits rose, for sure no damsel in her senses could long resist so refined a combination of elegant graces, leaving the lustre of the coronet quite out of the question. But the female heart—as my lady might be expected to remember—is prone to erratic courses; to start off down crooked byways, instead of keeping the straight road; to take distracting and inconvenient fancies, and generally to distress its friends.

But Shane was a *parti comme il y en a peu*. If he could only be induced to abandon the Doll Tearsheets, and direct amorous glances at the high-born young ladies of the metropolis, Doreen might be permitted to run her foolish race unchecked, for Shane could be well married without her. Un-

luckily the male heart is not too justly balanced neither. Shane liked something more highly spiced than an innocent miss, who, he declared, always made him qualmish with a smell of bread and butter. Nobody could accuse Doreen of anything so vapid, and Shane certainly liked Doreen after a careless fashion, though he never in his life had made love to her. My lady now proposed to rate him on this subject, for the possibility of choosing another bride for him in due time was finally put out of the question by the imminent danger of some catastrophe with Norah. It was clear, all things considered, that there was nothing for it but to remove my lord forthwith to his fastness in the north, and keep him there for a time; and it was quite certain that no high-born damsels with suitable attributes were to be found in the wilds of Donegal, straying about in search of husbands.

‘Mother!’ Shane said gaily, ‘we had such a whimsical accident last night. George Fitzgerald wagered to keep three of the best of us at bay with his single rapier-point, for a whole hour. I saw he was too drunk to stand, so I took the bet at once, and off we marched, borrowing their lanterns from the watchmen as we passed, to the ring in Stephen’s Green. George steadied himself against the statue, and really made superb play—I could not have done better myself—till somebody in the crowd shouted, “For God’s sake part them!” to which another blackguard hallooed, “Let them have it out, for one will be killed, and the rest hanged for

murder, and so we shall be rid of a bunch of pests.” Of course this roused us, so we all turned on him, just to show he was wrong; and faix he was wrong, sure enough, for ’twas he that got killed, and none of us are ripe for hanging.’

‘But, Shane!’ my lady exclaimed, ‘who was the man? You are so imprudent.’

‘No one of any importance,’ responded her son, carelessly. ‘An old busybody—a shoemaker, I think, or a baker. Sure it was an accident, for George meant only to pink the spalpeen, and his sword went in too far—a miscalculation. Do you know, mother, that there’ll soon be no end to the insolence of these ruffians? There’s a report at the Castle that that crazy idiot Tone, to whom you were always much too kind, has succeeded in persuading the French to take up his cudgels. He’ll dance the Kilmainham minuet, as the saying is, take my word for it, and serve him right; but Lord Camden really thinks it’s serious. He talked with such mystery of plots last evening, of some scheme for attacking Dublin, that I thought his excellency was having a joke with us, till he said if things go on as they are going, there’ll be nothing for it but to proclaim martial law.’

My lady meditated for a time, reviewing this intelligence. ‘Then these United Irish did not intend to be mere wind-bags?’ she thought, and my Lord Camden was beginning to be afraid of them. Her common-sense told her that if, in a tussle, they got even for a moment the upper hand, their vengeance

would fall heavily upon the perpetrators of such reckless escapades as that which Shane had just narrated. At any rate, it was not good to give them such food for complaint. My lady's caste prejudices blinded her to the fact that when half-a-dozen youths (even blue-blood ones) set on a single man and slay him, the act is no better than murder, though they are content to deplore it for a minute as an accident. There was no doubt left in her mind that Doreen's advice had been of the very best. She must even go to Ennishowen, however great the pain might be to herself in the revival of unpleasant memories. So, shaking her head, she remarked : ' Dear Shane ! in '45 the Scotch rebels advanced within a hundred miles of London. If 5,000 ragged Highlanders are capable of that, why should not the French army march on Dublin ? Lord Clare spoke to me yesterday on the subject of the yeomanry. It seems that the Privy Council expect you to undertake this district.'

' I should like that !' Shane said.

' It would not be wise, though,' returned his mother, quietly. ' The aristocracy will have a difficult game to play if these silly people really aim at violence. The executive will have brought it on themselves, and it's only fair that they should get out of their own difficulties in their own way. In '82, when your father and I both wore the uniform, the case was different. Landlord and tenant were united, as lord and servant of the soil, against a foreigner who had maltreated both. Things have

changed since then. The position of the nobles is different. They have become Anglicised. Much of their interest is English. Yet it would be best for them not too openly to join the foreigner in coercing their own tenants—at least, not just now.'

The cunning old lady was saying what she did not quite believe, having in view an object, and Shane looked at her in surprise.

'If riots take place,' the countess proceeded, 'the commander-in-chief will put them down, if he thinks proper, with the English troops who have come over lately; and he and they will bear the odium. The Irish nobles would be placing themselves in a false position by interfering against their own people with too great alacrity. At all events, they will gain a point by waiting.'

'But, mother, the other lords are heading the squireens. If I hold back they will say I am a coward!'

'Not so, my son. Your proceedings every day would give the lie to that. I grant that if you sat here, or roystered on in Dublin, you might be accused of shuffling, which would not do. But if you went away? Not to England, no! That would not do either. Why not go to Ennishowen, under the pretext that here everything is safe under the paternal rule of the executive, whilst in the vast wild northern district, over which you hold sway, it would be politic for the lord to be amongst his tenants? You would be of local service, and at

that distance no one could be sure whether or no your future actions were guided by events.'

'You do not believe that this pack of fools will do any harm?'

'Certainly not, or I would not counsel you to go away. Cannot you see that in ignoble squabbles with the scum it is best to keep clean hands by remaining neutral? They will be put down—of course they will be put down; but, you stupid fellow, we must so manage that you have no hand in it. We will go to Glas-aitch-é. 'Tis long since we were there.'

Shane twirled the satin ear of Eblana round his finger absently. This move of his mother's puzzled him. What would his life be away at wild Glas-aitch-é without his boon companions, among boors who had probably never heard of a Hellfire Club? In earlier days he used to be madly fond of field-sports, was still devoted to certain branches of the chase. But suddenly to leave the joys of a gay metropolis to bury himself in a hut on practically a desert island, was no pleasant prospect. And dear Norah, too, must she be left behind? Accustomed as he was to bow to his mother's ascendancy in political questions as in the management of the estates, the vision of Norah deploring in dishevelled loneliness the absence of his fascinating self was too much for him.

'I cannot go, mother! It would look like flight,' he said with a show of firmness.

My lady was too acute not to read his thoughts;

too wise to expect her son to yield without a flutter. She moved with stately sweep to where he sat, and, pressing his face with her two hands, whispered fondly as she knelt down beside him. ‘My darling, do you not know that I would cut my heart out for you, that I would walk to the stake to save you one needless pang? Men can never realise the fulness of a mother’s love—the sublimity of its unselfishness—the majesty of its devotion. It is the one ray of the Divine which has been allowed to glimmer forth on our dull earth. Do you suppose I would counsel you to aught that could bring you injury? that I have not anxiously weighed each side of the question before deciding what is best? You know that I love you much better than myself. You know that Heaven has denied you cleverness. You are not clever, my poor child; but we can’t help that, can we? And you are not good, I am sorely afraid. Yet as your mother I love you no whit the less. Try to comprehend what a mother’s love is like—how large—how grandly blind in that it might see but will not!’

As she spoke, the poor lady who had been so buffeted by worldly troubles was transfigured by the strength of her affection for this one being. The fact of her loving nothing else served but to increase her love. As one, some of whose senses have decayed whilst others are proportionately sensitised, she felt with intensity all which affected her firstborn. It was strange that she could not remember that Terence also was her son—that he had

pined for such a display as this all his life in vain—that even now (yawning in the Four-courts) he would have upset the presiding judge and sent all the attorneys to a man into the Liffey, and galloped at breakneck speed to Strogue if his mother would only have given him one of the looks which she was lavishing on Shane—one of those hand-touches that are in nowise akin to ‘paddling,’ but which send stronger thrills through us than the most languishing of eyes.

‘Ireland is being involved in complicated difficulties,’ she pursued. ‘You must be obedient, and allow me to lead you through them safely. It will only be for a month or two. Then all will be over, and we can come back here again. Say you will do as I wish?’

Shane never could long withstand his mother’s coaxing, when she condescended to implore. Is it not always thus? Is it not worth while to be haughty, arrogant, ill-tempered—as the case may be—if only for the fuller appreciation of our benignity when we elect to be benign? Shane clung to the dowager’s last straw, which with artful artlessness she had held out to him. It would only be for a month or two. It would do Norah all the good in life to miss her beloved for a space; while he was away, she would measure his merits, and fly with rapture to his bosom on his return. It would be rather fun, too, again to visit for a few weeks the haunts he used so to doat upon. But it ill became him as one of the sterner sex to be over-easily persuaded.

‘It will be very dull up there, mother,’ he objected.

‘How civil of you,’ the countess said, kissing him, for she saw the point was gained. ‘If you are a good boy, I will ask your uncle to let Doreen come too. Her eccentricities will enliven us.’

‘You are always talking of Doreen!’ complained my lord. ‘I can’t see why you make so much fuss about her.’

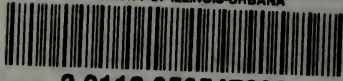
‘Then we won’t take her,’ responded my lady, with prompt and Machiavellian wisdom.

‘I care not,’ he returned. ‘Perhaps we had better take her, and I’ll teach her to shoot seals.’

And so the matter was decided, whilst my lady made up her mind that, once in Donegal, her son should stop there under one pretext or another until all danger from Miss Gillin should be averted.

END OF VOL. I.

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